TALES

FROM

"BLACKWOOD"



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ROSAURA: A TALE OF MADRID.

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IN the year 1833 there dwelt in Madrid a certain student, who went by the name of El Rubio, or the Red. Not by his acquaintances and intimates alone was he thus designated, but by all the various classes of idlers with whom the Spanish capital abounds; by the listless loiterers at the coffeehouse doors, by the lounging gossips of the Puerta del Sol, and by the cloaked saunterers who, when the siesta is over, pace the alleys of the Retiro, puffing their beloved havanas, retailing the latest news, discussing the chances of a change of ministry, or the most recent and interesting scandalous anecdote current in that gallant metropolis. It would be wrong to infer, from his somewhat ambiguous appellation, that the student's skin had the copper hue of a Pawnee or an Osage, or his hair the ruddy

tint usually deemed detrimental and unbecoming. The name implied no sneer—it was given and taken as a compliment; and Federico was at least as proud of it as of the abundant golden curls to which he owed it, and that flowed in waving luxuriance down his graceful neck, and even to his well-formed shoulders.

In southern climes, where the ardent sun embrowns the children of the soil, fair locks and eyes of azure are prized in proportion to their rarity. No wonder, then, that Federico found favour in the sight of the dark-browed and inflammable Madrileñas. Many were the tender glances darted at him from beneath veil and mantilla, as he took his evening stroll upon the Prado; oftentimes, when he passed along the street, white and slender fingers, protruded through half-closed *jalousies*, dropped upon his handsome head a shower of fragrant jasmin blossoms. Amongst the dames and damsels who thus signified their favour and partiality, not a few—so it is certified by the veracious authority whence we derive this history—dwelt in stately mansions, and went abroad in brave equipage, drawn by prancing steeds and comely mules, all glittering with trappings of silk and gold. These, it may be thought, condescended over-much thus to notice an humble student. But the love-breathing daughters of Castile reck little of rank and station; and Federico, by all personal endowments, well deserved the dis-

tinction he obtained. Poor hidalgo though he was, no count or duke, or blue-blooded grandee, from Cadiz to Corunna, bore himself better, or had more the mien of a well-born and thoroughbred *caballero*. None more gallantly wore the broad-leafed sombrero, none more gracefully draped the ample cloak; and all Spain might have been searched in vain to match the bright and joyous glance of the student's dark-blue eye. Excepting on the coast, and in certain districts where Mohammedan forefathers have bequeathed their oriental physiognomy and tall slender frame to their Christian descendants, Spaniards are rarely of very lofty stature. Federico was from the flat and arid province of La Mancha, where, as in compensation for the unproductiveness of the parched soil, handsome men and beauteous women abound. Of the middle height, his figure was symmetrical, elastic, and muscular, formed for feats of agility and strength; his step was light, but firm; his countenance manly,—the expression of his regular and agreeable features denoted a passionate nature and lofty character. Like most of his countrymen, he was quickly roused, but easy to appease. Generosity and forbearance were prominent amongst his good qualities; and he had nobly displayed them in more than one encounter with antagonists whose feebleness placed them at his mercy and rendered them unworthy of his wrath. For in the use of arms, as in all manly exercises,

Federico was an adept; and there were few men in Spain who would not have found in him a formidable and dangerous adversary.

Strange to tell of so young a man, and of a Spaniard, in one respect our student appeared passionless. He met the advances of his female admirers with the utmost coldness—seemed, indeed, to avoid the society of the fair sex, threw love-letters into the fire, unread and unanswered, neglected invitations, went to no rendezvous. Favours which other men would gladly have purchased with years of life, he disdainfully rejected. The wrinkled duennas, who under various pretexts brought him tender messages and tempting assignations, met, instead of the golden guerdon with which such Mercuries are usually rewarded, harsh rebuffs and cutting sarcasm at the hands of the stoic of two-and-twenty. And with so much scorn did this Manchegan Joseph repel on one occasion the amorous attentions of a lady of birth and station, that her indiscreet love was changed into bitter hate, and Federico narrowly escaped a dagger-stab and a premature death. From that day he was more inaccessible than ever, not only to women, but to men. Gradually he withdrew from intercourse with his former associates, and was seldom seen in the streets or public places, but sat at home, buried amongst books, and diligently studying, with the intention, he was heard to declare, of going to Ciudad Real,

and passing his examination as advocate in the royal courts. And thus, little by little, it happened with Federico as it does with most persons who neglect and forget the world. The world forgot him. His old intimates—joyous, light-hearted lads, revelling in the enjoyments and dissipation of the capital—voted him a spoil-sport and a pedant, and thought of him no more: friends, in the true sense of the word, he had none; and so, after a very short time, the list of visitors to the gloomy old apartment in which the eccentric youth mused and studied was reduced to one man, and that a very odd one, but whom Federico loved, because he in some sort owed him his life.

This second hero of our tale was one of those strange characters to be met with in Spain only. Don Geronimo Regato was a little wizened old creature, blind of an eye, and with a very ugly face, whose life had been a series of extraordinary adventures and bustling incidents. He had served his country in the most opposite capacities. In 1808, he fought the French in the streets of Madrid; two years later, he headed a guerilla band in the wild passes of the Sierra Morena; another two years, and he took the oath to the constitution of Cadiz, and was seen at Wellington's headquarters as colonel of the Spanish line, and delegate from the Cortes. In 1814, he changed his colours, and was noted, after the return of Ferdinand VII., as a stanch Royalist. But variety was his motto; and the revolution of

1820 saw him in the ranks of the Liberals, to whom he continued faithful until their cause was ruined and hopeless. That was the signal, with this Talleyrand on a small scale, for another *vuelta casaca:* once more he turned his coat; and as an earnest of penitence for past offences, opened to the Royalist troops the gates of a small Estremaduran fortress. Notwithstanding this act of tardy allegiance, he was thrown into prison at Madrid, and owed it entirely to the intercession and good offices of an old schoolfellow, the influential Father Cyrillo, that his neck was not brought into unpleasant contact with the iron hoop of the *garrote.* Either warned by this narrow escape, or because the comparatively tranquil state of Spain afforded no scope for his restless activity, since 1823 this political Proteus had lived in retirement, apparently eschewing plots and intrigues; although he was frequently seen in the very highest circles of the capital, where his great experience, his conversational powers and social qualities sufficiently accounted for the welcome he at all times met.

Returning late one night from a tertulia at the house of Ferdinand's prime minister, Don Geronimo heard the clash of steel and sound of a scuffle, and, hurrying to the spot, saw a young man defending himself against the attack of two bravos. Forthwith Regato set himself to shout out words of command, as if he had a whole regiment at his back,

and the ruffians, thinking the patrol was upon them, instantly took to flight. Federico was the person assailed; and although he boldly asserted, and doubtless fully believed, that, left to himself, he would speedily have defeated his cowardly opponents, he was still not altogether sorry to be relieved from such odds by the old gentleman's timely arrival and ingenious stratagem. This was the origin of his acquaintance with Regato. From that night forward they visited each other, and soon Geronimo took particular pleasure in the society of the handsome youth, whose earnestness and vigour of mind, he was heard cynically to remark, were refreshing to contemplate in a century when the actions of most men made them resemble beasts and apes, rather than beings formed in the image of their Creator. The young student, for his part, found much to interest him in his new friend, the only person who now varied the monotony of his solitude. He listened eagerly to Regato's discourse, as he alternately poured out his stores of knowledge and experience, and broke into a vein of keen and bitter sarcasm on the men, parties, and circumstances of distracted and unhappy Spain. Federico enthusiastically loved his country, and his proud eyes often filled with tears when the old man placed its former greatness in striking contrast with its present degradation. In spite of all the veerings and weathercock variations of his political life,

Regato was at heart a Liberal. He set forth in glowing colours the evils and tyranny of Ferdinand's government, expatiated on the barbarous executions of Riego, Torrijos, and other martyrs to freedom's cause, and exposed the corruption and villany of the men who retained their country in the bonds of slavery and fanaticism; until Federico's cheeks glowed, and his heart beat quick with patriotic indignation, and he felt that he too, when the battle-hour should strike, would joyfully draw his sword and lose his life for the liberation of the land he loved so well. At times the student would take down his guitar, and sing, with closed doors and windows—for Ferdinand's spies were a quick-eared legion—the spirit-stirring Hymn of the Constitution, or the wild Tragala—that Spanish Marseillaise, to whose exciting notes rivers of blood have flowed. And then old Regato beat time with his hand, and his solitary eye gleamed like a ball of fire, whilst he mingled his hoarse and suppressed bass with Federico's mellow tenor.

Notwithstanding their vast difference of age and character, and although the one was but commencing, whilst the other had nearly run, the up-hill race of life, the more these two men saw of each other the stronger grew their sympathy and friendship. Don Geronimo's visits to the student became more and more frequent; and often, forgetful or careless of the time, they would sit talking till far

into the night. It seemed a relief to Regato to disburden his heart and mind of their innermost secrets; and he rejoiced to have found a man to whose honour, truth, and secresy he felt he could safely intrust them. Federico repaid his confidence with one equally unlimited. He not only told his friend the history of his short life from infancy upwards, but he made him his father confessor, informed him of the progress of his studies, confided to him his doubts and hopes, his religious creed and political aspirations, and even his connection with some of the secret orders and societies, of which, at that period, notwithstanding the vigilance of the police, a multitude existed in Spain.

"And can it be, my young friend," said Geronimo one evening, when a brief pause succeeded to some of the fiery Federico's vehement political diatribes—"can it be," he said, fixing his penetrating eye upon the flushed and impassioned countenance of the student, "that you have reached your present age and never loved woman?"

"Pshaw!" replied the student, "you have asked the question before, and I have answered it."

"But 'tis incomprehensible and out of nature," cried the old Don. "Why have you a heart in your bosom, blood in your veins, strong limbs, and bright eyes?"

"Was all that given me that I might love woman?" retorted Federico, with a merry laugh.

"Certainly: what is life worth, without love to sweeten it? Nothing, worse than nothing. It is that gentle sympathy of hearts, that strange fever of the soul, those sweet hopes and joyous transports, and tremors scarce less pleasing, that render life endurable, and reconcile man to the vileness of mortality. The nearest approach to paradise on earth is found in bright eyes that beam for us alone —in gentle lips that murmur to our ears words of pure tenderness and unselfish affection."

"By the Virgin!" cried Federico, "I am neither of wood nor stone. Yes, there are creatures of heavenly beauty whom I *could* love. But I am like the Moorish Prince of Granada, who was too proud to eat common food, and fed on gold. The metal was over-hard for his royal stomach, and so he starved."

"Which means that what you could have, you don't like, and what you would like, you can't get."

"Possible," replied Federico, smiling. "I strike high."

"And why not? To dare is often to succeed. For the bold and the prudent no aim is too lofty. But tell me more."

"Nonsense!" cried the student. "I did but jest. It occurred to me that this very day I saw a lady whose fair face I shall not easily forget. She was richly dressed, and sat in an open carriage, drawn by magnificent horses."

"What colour was the carriage?"

"Brown, lined with purple velvet. The arms on the panels were supported by coroneted griffins; and on the luxurious cushions my goddess reclined, in a robe of rose-coloured satin. A black lace mantilla floated over her alabaster shoulders, further veiled by a cloud of glossy ebon hair; and her eyes, friend Geronimo, her beauteous eyes—they were soft and heavenly as a spring day in the almond groves of Valencia."

"You are poetical," said Regato. "A good sign. Federico, you are in love; but, by our Lady, you are audacious in your choice."

"Do you know her?" eagerly exclaimed Federico.

"Did she appear to notice you?" inquired Geronimo, leaving the question unanswered.

"Paralysed by her exceeding beauty," replied the student, "I stood dumb and motionless in the carriage-way, and was nearly run over. I sprang aside, but just in time. She observed me and smiled: I almost think she blushed. One thing I am sure of—she could not help seeing that her wondrous beauty had turned my head."

"And that is all?" said Regato, slyly.

"What more could there be?" cried the young lawyer, indignantly. "Would you have such an angel throw flowers at me, or appoint a rendezvous? When the carriage turned out of the street towards

the Prado, she looked back. Holy Mother of Sorrows! even at that distance, the sunshine of those eyes scorched my very heart!—But this is folly, sheer folly! Next week I go to Ciudad Real, and amongst dusty deeds and dry folios I shall soon forget the eyes and their owner."

Señor Regato assumed a thoughtful countenance, took a large pinch of snuff, and lit a fresh cigar. After three or four puffs, emitted through his nostrils with the delectation of a veteran smoker, he broke silence.

"You will not go to Ciudad Real."

"And why not?" cried Federico.

"Because, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will remain here."

"Strange if I do!" laughed the student.

"Less so, perhaps, than you imagine. Would you go if the rose-coloured lady bid you stay? What if she sent a tender billet to the young woman-hater, and said, 'Come and love me, if you have the heart and courage of a man.' I think I see you then, though ten thousand devils barred the way. Ciudad Real and the royal courts would soon be forgotten."

"Perhaps," replied Federico. "But you tantalise me with impossibilities."

Don Geronimo put on his hat, took his young friend's hand, and said, with great gravity, "Nothing is impossible. And as regards love, nought

in this world can withstand it—no bolt, or lock, or bar, or rank, or power. Bear that in mind, and be of good courage, if you again fall in with her of the rose-coloured robe. I should not wonder if you saw her this very night. Be happy whilst you may, whilst youth and beauty last. They quickly pass, and never return; and in love be adventurous and bold, like a true Spaniard and gallant gentleman. Daring wins the day."

He departed. Federico remained alone. With a smile at his friend's advice, the young man sat down to study. But he soon started up, and gazed like one in a dream at the massive volumes encumbering his table. He knew not how it happened, but the well-known letters of the alphabet seemed changed into inexplicable hieroglyphics. The simplest passages were wholly unintelligible; the paragraphs were all rose-coloured; black locks and brilliant eyes twined and sparkled through the quaint arabesques and angular capitals that commenced each chapter of the code, confusing and dazzling his brain. At last he angrily slammed the parchment-bound volume, muttered a curse on his own folly, then laughed aloud at the recollection of that comical old fellow, Geronimo Regato, and went to bed. There he found little rest. When he closed his eyes, the slender form of the incognita glided before them. Her white hand, extended from beneath her mantilla, beckoned him to follow;

nay, he felt the pressure of the tiny fingers, her warm breath upon his cheek, her velvet lips gently laid to his. And when he started from his sleep, it was to fancy the rustle of a dress, and a sweet low voice that timidly uttered his name. So passed the night, and only towards daybreak did he sink into a sounder and more refreshing slumber. But when he arose, he found, to his consternation, that she who had haunted his dreams was equally present to his waking imagination. The fascinating image of the beautiful stranger had established itself in his heart, and Federico felt that all efforts to dislodge it would be as fruitless as painful.

"If I believed in sorcery," he soliloquised, "I should think that old rogue Geronimo had cast a charm over me. He predicted that she would visit me this night, and truly she has done so, and here remains. Whether it be for the best, I greatly doubt."

Musing on the fair apparition that thus pertinaciously intruded upon him, the student dressed himself. It was late, and to atone for lost time, he resolved to remain at home, and study hard the whole day. But somehow or other, exactly at the same hour as on the previous one, he found himself in the Calle Alcala; and scarcely was he there, when the brown carriage and the splendid horses came rattling by. And there, upon the purple cushions, sat, more beautiful than ever, the divin-

ity who for the last twenty-four hours had monopolised so large a share of his thoughts. He gazed at her with rapture, and involuntarily bowed his head, as to a being not of the earth. She smiled: her look had something inquiring and mysterious; then, as if by accident, she placed her hand upon the edge of the carriage, and let a flower fall. Almost before it reached the ground, Federico caught and concealed it in his bosom, as though it had been some precious jewel which all would seek to tear from him. It was an almond blossom, a symbol of love and hope. Like a criminal, he hurried away, lest his prize should be reclaimed, when he suddenly found himself face to face with Geronimo, who gravely took off his hat and greeted his friend.

"How goes it?" said the old Don, his widowed eye twinkling significantly as he spoke. "How have you slept? Did the lady visit you or not?"

"You saw her!" cried Federico, imploringly. "For heaven's sake, her name?"

"Bah!" replied Geronimo; "I saw nothing. But if it be she who sits in yonder carriage, beware, young man! 'Tis dangerous jesting with giants, who can crush us like straws beneath their finger. Your life is in danger," he continued in a whisper; "forget this folly. There are plenty of handsome faces in the world. Throw away the silly flower that peeps from your vest, and be off to Ciudad Real, where scores of pretty girls await you."

He turned to depart; Federico detained him.

"Let me go," said Geronimo: "I am in haste. I will call upon you presently, and you shall hear more."

But, notwithstanding his promise, and although Federico remained all day at home, impatiently expecting him, Geronimo came not. Never had the student been so out of temper. He bitterly reproached himself as a dreamer, a fool, an idiot: and yet there he remained, his thoughts fixed upon one object, his eyes riveted on the almond blossom, which he had placed in water, and whose graceful cup, now fully open, emitted a delicate perfume. And as he gazed, fancy played her wildest pranks with the enamoured youth. Small fairy-like creatures glided and danced between the dusty stamina of the flower. At times, its leaves seemed partly to close, and from out the contracted aperture, the lady of his thoughts smiled sweetly upon him. Then the welcome vision vanished, and was succeeded by stern frowning faces of men, armed from head to heel, who levelled daggers at his heart.

"By St Jago!" the bewildered student at last exclaimed, "this is too much. When will it end? What ails me? Have I so long withstood the fascinations of the black-eyed traitresses, to be thus at last entrapped and unmanned? Geronimo was right; at daybreak I start for Ciudad Real. I will think no more of that perilous syren." He plucked

the almond blossom from its vase. "And this flower," he pensively murmured, "has touched her hand, perhaps her lips! Oh! were it possible that she loves me!" As he spoke, he pressed the flower so impetuously to his mouth that its tender leaves were crushed and tarnished. He laughed scornfully. "Thus is it," he exclaimed, "with woman's love; as fair and as fragile as this poor blossom. Begone, then! Wither, and become dust, thou perishable emblem of frailty!" Approaching the open window, he was about to throw away the flower, when something flew into the room, struck his breast, and rolled upon the ground. Federico started back, and his eye fell upon the clock that regulated his studies. The hands were on the stroke of midnight, and for a moment, in his then excited state, a feeling of superstitious fear stole over him. The next instant he was again at the window, straining his eyes through the gloom. He could see nothing. The night was dark: a few large stars twinkled in the sable canopy, the jasmin bushes in his balcony rustled in the breeze, and brushed their cool leaves against his heated temples. "Who is there?" he cried. His question was unanswered. Closing the *jalousies*, he took a light and sought about the room till he perceived something white under a table. It was a paper wrapped round a small roll of wood, and secured by a silken thread. Trembling with eagerness, he detached

the scroll. Upon it were traced a few lines in a woman's delicate handwriting. "If you are willing," so ran the missive, "to encounter some risk for an interview with her who writes this, you will repair, to-morrow evening at nine o'clock, to the western door of the church of St James. One will meet you there in whom you may confide, if he asks you what flower you love best."

"And though death were in the path," exclaimed Federico with vehement passion—"though a thousand swords opposed me, and King Ferdinand himself—" He paused at that name, with the habitual caution of a Manchegan. "I will go," he resumed, in a calmer but equally decided tone. "I will go; and though certain to be stabbed at her feet, I still would go."

Lazily, to the impetuous student's thinking, did the long hours loiter till that of his rendezvous arrived. Tormented by a thousand doubts and anxieties, not the least of these sprang from the probability that the assignation came not whence he hoped, and was, perhaps, the work of some mischievous jester, to send him on a fool's errand to the distant church of St James. Above all things, he wished to see his friend Geronimo; but although he passed the day in invoking his presence and heaping curses on his head, that personage did not appear. Evening came; the sun went down behind the gardens of Buen Retiro; at last it was

quite dark. Federico wrapped himself in his cloak, pressed his hat over his brows, concealed in the breast of his coat one of those knives whose strong keen-pointed blade is so terrible a weapon in a Spaniard's hand, and, crossing the Plaza Mayor, glided swiftly through streets and lanes, until, exactly as the clock of St James's church struck nine, he stood beneath the massive arches of the western portico. All was still as the grave. The dark enclosure of a convent arose at a short distance, and from a small high window a solitary ray of light fell upon the painted figure of the Virgin that stood in its grated niche on the church wall.

His back against the stone parapet, in the darkest corner of the portico, Federico posted himself, silent and motionless. He had not long waited, when he heard the sound of footsteps upon the rough pavement. They came nearer : a shadow crossed the front of the arched gateway and was merged in the gloom, as its owner, muttering indistinctly to himself, entered the portico. It was a man, closely muffled in a dark cloak. To judge from his high and pointed hat, he belonged to the lower class of the people ; a wild black beard, a moment visible in the light from the convent window, was all of his physiognomy discernible by the student. He might be anything—a Gallego, a muleteer, or a robber.

After a moment, Federico made a slight noise,

and advanced a step from his corner. "Who is there?" cried the stranger.—"Who is there?" he repeated. "Answer, in God's name. What do you here at this hour of the night?"

"Who questions me?" boldly demanded the young man; and at the same time he approached the speaker.

For a moment the two men gazed suspiciously at each other; then the stranger again spoke. "Night and solitude enjoin prudence, señor," said he; "and so, keep your distance. What brings you to this gloomy church-door? At this hour such gay cavaliers are oftener found in the Prado or the Delicias, plucking flowers for their mistresses."

"I love flowers," replied Federico, "but I also love solitude."

"And what flower, my gallant young gentleman, do you best love?"

"Enough! enough!" joyfully exclaimed the student. "'Tis you I seek: I am ready to follow."

Without reply, the stranger produced a long black cloth.

"What is that?" said Federico, who vigilantly observed his movements.

"To blindfold you."

"Why?"

"Señor, that you may not see whither I conduct you."

"Not so!" cried the student, suspiciously. "I will follow, but with open eyes."

The Gallego threw the skirt of his large cloak over his left shoulder, touched his pointed hat by way of salutation, and said courteously, "*Buenas noches, señor.* May you sleep well, and live a thousand years."

"Stop!" cried Federico; "you are mad. Whither away?"

"Home."

"Without me?"

"Without you, señor. The truth is, you are wanted blind, or not at all."

The result of the colloquy that ensued was, that the Gallego twisted his cloth thrice round the student's eyes, ears, and nose, and led him carefully down a street and round sundry corners and turnings, till at last he deposited him in a carriage, which instantly set off at a rapid pace. After a tolerably long drive, by no means a pleasant one for our adventurer, whose guide held his hands firmly in his—probably to prevent his removing the bandage—the coach stopped, the two men got out, and Federico was again conducted for some distance on foot. He knew that he was still in Madrid, for he walked over pavement, and, in spite of the thick cloth that impeded his hearing, he could distinguish the distant sound of carriages and hum of life. Presently a door creaked, and he

apparently entered a garden, for there was a smell of flowers and a rustling of leaves; then he ascended a staircase, and was conducted through cool lofty apartments, and through doors which seemed to open and shut of themselves. Suddenly his companion let go his hand. Federico stood for a minute in silent expectation, then, groping around him with extended arms, he said in a low voice, "Am I at my journey's end? Answer!" But nobody replied.

By one decided pull, the student removed the bandage from his eyes, and gazed around him in wonder and bewilderment. He was alone in a spacious and magnificent apartment, whose walls were tapestried with striped blue and white satin, and whose carved ceiling was richly gilt and decorated. The tall Venetian mirrors, the costly furniture, the beautifully fine Indian matting, everything in the room, in short, convinced him that he was in the favoured abode of wealth, and rank, and luxury. A lamp, suspended by silver chains, shed a soft light over the apartment. Federico's position was a doubtful, probably a dangerous one; but love emboldened him, and he felt the truth of a saying of Geronimo's, that courage grows with peril. Happen what might, there he was, and he knew no fear. The only perceptible exit from the room was by the large folding-doors through which he had entered. He tried them—they were fas-

tened. His mother-wit suggested to him that his retreat had perhaps been thus cut off that he might seek another outlet. He did so, and presently perceived hinges under the tapestry. A silver handle protruded from the wall; he grasped it, a door opened, and a cry of astonishment and delight burst from the student. Beaming with loveliness, a blush upon her cheek, a soft smile upon her rosy lips, the lady of his thoughts stood before him.

For a moment the pair gazed at each other in silence, their looks telling more eloquently than any words the love that filled their hearts. But soon Federico started from his brief trance, threw himself at the feet of the incognita, and, seizing her hand, pressed it ardently to his lips, murmuring the while, in low and passionate accents, such broken and rapturous sentences as only lovers speak and love alone can comprehend. The lady stood over him, her graceful form slightly bowed, her large lustrous eyes alternately fixed upon the kneeling youth and roving anxiously round the apartment.

"Don Federico," she said, in tones whose sweetness thrilled his blood, "may the Holy Virgin forgive my unmaidenly boldness. I have yielded to an impulse stronger than my reason—to the desire of seeing you, of hearing——"

"That I love you," interrupted Federico—"that

I adore you from the first hour I beheld you,—that I will die at your feet if you refuse me hope!"

She bent forward, and laid her small rosy hand upon his throbbing forehead. The touch was electric, the fiery glow of passion flashed in her glance. "Light of my eyes!" she whispered, "it were vain to deny that my heart is thine. But our love is a flower on the precipice's brink."

"I fear not the fall," Federico impetuously exclaimed.

"Dare you risk everything?"

"For your love, everything!" was the enthusiastic reply.

"Listen, then, to the difficulties that beset us, and say if they are surmountable."

The maiden paused, started, grew pale.

"Hark!" she exclaimed—"what is that? He comes! Be still! be silent!" With wild and terrified haste she seized Federico's hand, dragged him across the room, and opened a door. The student felt a burning kiss upon his lips, and, before he knew where he was, the door was shut, and he was in total darkness. All that had happened since he entered the house had occurred so rapidly, was so mysterious and startling, that he was utterly bewildered. For a moment he thought himself betrayed, groped round his prison, which was a narrow closet, found the door, and, grasping his stiletto, was about to force his way through all

opposition, when he suddenly heard heavy steps on the other side of the tapestried screen. Motionless, he listened.

"Bring lights!" said a deep commanding voice; "the lamp burns dim as in a bridal chamber."

"It anticipates its office," replied another male voice, with a laugh. "Is not your wedding-day fixed?"

"Not yet; in the course of next week, perhaps," answered the first speaker, striding up and down the apartment.

"You are in small haste," returned his companion, "to enjoy what all envy you. Never did I behold beauty more divine and captivating."

"Beautiful she certainly is," was the reply; "but what is woman's beauty! The vision of a day; snow, sullied and dispelled in a night."

"You are in exceeding good humour," said the friend of this morose and moralising bridegroom.

A pause ensued, during which Federico's heart beat so strongly that he thought its throbbings must surely be audible through the slight barrier separating him from the speakers. A servant brought lights, and a slender bright ray shot through a small opening in the tapestry, previously unobserved by the student. Applying his eye to the crevice, he obtained a view of the apartment, and of the persons whose conversation he had overheard. One of these wore a uniform glittering with embroidery; the other

was dressed in black, with several stars and orders on his breast. Both were in the middle period of life: the one in uniform was the youngest and most agreeable looking; the dark features of the other were of a sombre and unpleasing cast.

The servant left the room, and the man in black suspended his walk and paused opposite his friend.

"You had something to communicate?" he said, in a suppressed voice.

"Are we secure from listeners?" asked the officer, in French.

"Entirely; and doubly so if we speak French. Rosaura herself, did she overhear us, would be none the wiser."

"Count," said the soldier, "I sincerely wish you joy of this marriage."

"A thousand thanks! But with equal sincerity I tell you that I am heartily weary of such congratulations. In marrying, one gives and takes. I give Rosaura my name and rank, titles and dignities, honours and privileges."

"And you take your lovely ward and a rich estate. A fair exchange, Excellency. I can only say that the world wonders at the delay of so suitable a union, and even inclines to the belief that a certain disinclination——"

"The world is greatly mistaken," interrupted the Count. "I ardently love Rosaura, and I have his Majesty's consent to the marriage. But what a

fool men take me for, if they suppose——" he stopped short, and tossed his head with a scornful smile.

"Well?" said the officer.

"Solve the riddle yourself."

"I understand! Your position is uneasy, the future dark, the decisive moment at hand. With one's feet on a volcano, one is little disposed to enjoy a honeymoon."

"But when the mine explodes, and one is tossed into the air, it is pleasant to fall in the soft lap of love, there to forget one's wounds."

"Bravo! But what if the lap refuse to receive the luckless engineer?"

"*Amigo!*" replied the Count—"I thought you knew me better. Under all circumstances, Rosaura remains mine. For myself have I trained and nurtured this fair and delicate plant, and to me, as the gardener, it belongs."

"She loves you, then?"

"Loves me? What a question! Of course she does. She has grown up with the idea that she is to be my wife. Her heart is pure and unblemished as a diamond: it shall be my care to keep it so."

"You fear rivals?"

"Fear!" repeated the Count, a smile flitting over his dark countenance. "But we trifle precious time. What have you to tell me?"

"Something important to our cause," replied the

officer, drawing nearer to his companion. "But first, how goes it yonder?"

He pointed with his finger in the direction of the closet. Federico instinctively started back, but again applied his eye to the loophole on hearing the Count's answer. "I have just come thence," he said, "and must soon return. The hand of death is upon him—in vain would he parry the blow. Still the struggle is a hard one; he persists in discrediting his danger, and will abandon none of his habits. But the remorseless tyrant is there, soon to claim him for his own."

"Then we must take our measures without delay," said the officer.

"They are already taken," was his companion's quiet answer.

"Your colleagues are agreed?"

"Fully agreed."

"And now?"

"Read that," said the Count, taking a large folded paper from a portfolio, and spreading it before his friend, who devoured its contents with every demonstration of extreme surprise.

"His handwriting! his signature!" he cried. "A revocation, annihilating the shameless intrigues and machinations of years! Now, Heaven be praised, our country and religion—the faith, honour, and dignity of Spain are rescued! How was it

obtained? How possible? My noble friend, you are indeed a great statesman!"

"Take this priceless document," calmly replied the Count; "convey it to your master. Only in his hands is it entirely safe. The future welfare of Spain, the salvation of us all, is suspended to its seal. That I obtained it," he continued, his voice sinking to a whisper, "is the work of Providence. During the last two days he has had spasms and fainting fits that have weakened his mind and energies. The secret is well kept, and without the palace gates nought is known of these dangerous symptoms. In such moments of agony and depression, the weary soul recalls the past, and trembles for the future. Then, in vivid colours, I placed before him the confusion and unhappiness, and infernal mischief, to which his deplorable decision must give rise; I urged the injustice he had committed, the sin that would lie at his door; and showed how, almost before his eyes had closed, the work he had achieved at peril to his soul would sink and crumble in an ocean of blood and tears. Alcudia supported me; the others chimed in; this document was ready, and——he signed."

"And now we have got it," cried the officer, triumphantly, "we will hold it fast with hands and teeth. How long, think you, may he still live?"

"Castillo says not more than two days, and that

he will hardly regain the full use of his intellects." The eyes of the conspirators met; for a moment they gazed at each other, and then broke into a smile.

"Well," said the officer, "I came commissioned to assure you special favour and high reward, but, by my honour as a soldier, no gain or recompense can worthily requite such service as yours."

"For me little can be done," replied the Count. "My desires tend to a peaceful existence in the arms of my young wife, far removed from cares of state. Such is the reward I promise myself. Let your acts be speedy and decided, for it might well happen that——" his brow contracted into deeper folds, and his voice assumed a discordant harshness —"I have decimated the ranks of the scoundrels, but enough yet remain to give much trouble. Take sure measures, and muster your resources. You will need them all."

"Fear not," replied the confident soldier. "We, too, have been active, and have good and steady friends. At a word, the Realista volunteers and the trusty Agraviados fly to their arms. Romagosa, Caraval, Erro, Gonzalez, and the venerable Cyrillo, still live. The Guards are for us; so are the civil authorities and captains-general of eleven provinces. Let the moment come, and you will see that, with this document in our hand, all is done. Confidence for confidence," he continued. "Read this list of names. It contains those of our most

approved friends, and will reassure you as to the chances of the future."

He handed a paper to the Count, who, barely looking at it, said thoughtfully—

"Leave it with me till to-morrow. At the critical moment it will be of immense weight with many waverers. 'Tis late; in a few minutes I must go out. Place me at the feet of your gracious master, and tell him he will have no more faithful subject than his humble slave."

"Will you see him?" said the officer, gently. His companion shook his head.

"'Twere not wise," he replied. "The time is not yet come. When it arrives, I shall be the first to bend knee before him. Be watchful, prudent, and prompt. Yet one word. You have confided somewhat in that fellow Regato. Trust him not too far. I deem him a traitor. Let him be proved such, and he shall not escape the rope he has long deserved. And now, farewell!"

The two men parted, and, as the Count returned from the door, Federico heard a rustling of silks that materially increased the rapidity of his heart's pulsations.

"My fair bride!" gallantly exclaimed his Excellency, "I am enchanted to see you. How lovely you look, Rosaura! and how deeply I regret that important affairs leave me but a few moments to devote to you."

"It would seem," said the lady, with cold severity, "that your Excellency has converted my poor apartment into an audience-chamber."

"A thousand pardons, dear Rosaura," was the reply. "A particular friend craved a short interview."

"It is late," said the lady, pointedly. "I wish your Excellency a good night."

"What!" cried the Count, impatiently. "You dismiss me thus?"

"I am indisposed to-night."

"You are a cruel tyrant, Rosaura."

"I, Excellency? They say worse things of you."

"Who, and what?"

"No matter. May your Excellency live a thousand years."

"With you, Rosaura," replied the Count, assuming an air of tenderness which, as Federico thought, sat supremely ill upon him, and endeavouring to take her hand. She drew it quickly back.

"*Veremos, Excelencia.* We shall see."

"The devil take the Excellency!" cried the Count, losing all self-command, and stamping angrily with his foot. Rosaura curtsied low.

"You forget my rights over you, Rosaura. I came to tell you that in a few days, as I hope, my dearest wishes will be accomplished."

"We shall see, Excellency," repeated the provoking beauty.

The Count stepped up to her, and said, with his sullen smile, "You rejoice not at it, Rosaura?"

"No," was her laconic reply.

"You love me not?"

"Love *you*, Excellency? a great statesman like you! Certainly not, Excellency."

"I grieve to hear it, my beautiful bride; but, fortunately, love often comes with marriage. You shall learn to love me, Rosaura. Our existence shall be a happy and envied one. You detest state affairs: I will leave them and devote myself solely to you. Far from the capital, we will lead a pastoral life, amidst myrtles and meadows, flocks and shepherds, in all the sweet tranquillity of a terrestrial paradise."

Whether sketched in jest or in earnest, this picture of rustic felicity had evidently few charms for Rosaura, at least in the companionship proposed. Suddenly she stepped up to the Count, took his hand, looked full into his dark serious countenance, and laughed aloud and most musically.

"What do I hear, Excellency," she exclaimed; "*you* in myrtle groves and smiling meadows—*you* leading a shepherd's tranquil life! Oh, ye Saints! *he* a shepherd in the Alpuxarras. Ah! the flocks would fly and scatter themselves when they beheld the gloomy lines upon your brow. Where are sheep to be found who would be tended by that ensanguined hand? Where could *you* find repose?

Is there a place free from the echoes of the curses that martyred Liberals have heaped upon you? Where is the domestic hearth around which would not range themselves the spectres of the wretches who, at your command, have been blotted from the book of life. Count, I shudder at the thought! Holy Mother of God! is that the happy future you would compel me to share? No, no, never!—though the garrote were to encircle my neck, as it did that of the unhappy lady at Granada, who refused to betray her husband, and whom you sent to the scaffold in his stead! Has she never appeared to your Excellency, cold and pale, and with sightless eyes? For Quito's treasures would I not behold her—her and the whole ghastly train; hundreds, ay hundreds of them, in the long, black-bordered shrouds, and the bare-footed friars with their fearful *misericordia!* Mercy, mercy, Excellency! with me would come the evil spirits, and a thousand——but, good-night, good-night, Excellency."

With a graceful movement of hand and head she glided from the room. The Count attempted not to detain her. He stood motionless, his hand thrust into his breast, and followed her with his eyes in mute astonishment.

"The silly child!" he at last murmured. "But how lovely she is! I, whom all fear—even HE," he emphatically added—"I almost quail before her

mad petulance. Well, well!" he continued after a pause, "the priest first, and discipline afterwards. A man who has bowed and broken so many stubborn spirits, will hardly be vanquished by the humours of a wilful girl. Good-night, my lovely bride. 'We shall see,' you said; and assuredly we *will* see."

He took his hat, and was about to leave the room, when, by an inadvertent movement, Federico let fall his poniard. The Count was quick of hearing, and the noise, slight as it was, drew his attention. He turned sharply towards the spot where the student was concealed.

"What was that?" he cried. "Something fell in the closet. Have we listeners here?"

For an instant he hesitated; then, taking one of the massive silver candlesticks, he stepped briskly to the closet, and was almost knocked down by the door, which Federico pushed violently open. The waxlights fell to the ground; like a winged shadow, the student sprang past the astonished Count, reached the door before the latter recovered from his alarm, and would doubtless have got clear off, had he not, in hurry and ignorance, turned the wrong handle. The Count grasped his coat-skirt, and pulled him back.

"Scoundrel!" he cried. "What do you here?"

For sole reply, Federico seized his assailant by the throat, and a struggle began, which, although

speedily decided in favour of the active student, was destined to have most important results. The Count was vigorous, and defended himself well. He had little opportunity of calling out, closely grappled as he was, but he dealt his antagonist more than one heavy blow. At last Federico dashed him to the ground, and disappeared from the room, leaving behind him one of his coat-skirts, torn off in the contest. In falling, the Count's head struck against a table, and he lay for a few seconds stunned by the shock. Recovering himself, he sprang to his feet, foaming with rage, his dark visage black with shame and anger. "Seize him!" he cried, hurrying down the corridor. Twenty servants flew to obey the order. But it was too late. The student passed like a fire-flash before the porter, and made good his escape from the house. "Follow him!" shouted the Count—"a hundred ounces for his capture!" And, stimulated by this princely reward, the eager domestics ran, like hounds after a deer, on the track of the student, who soon heard the shouts of his enemies, and the shrill whistle of the *serenos*, around and on all sides of him.

Although panting from his brief but violent struggle with the Count, Federico traversed with extreme swiftness several streets and squares, until want of breath at last compelled him to a moment's pause. He looked around, and observed the local-

ity. Before him lay the massive buildings of the royal palace, favoured by whose shadow he continued his flight, now up-hill. But the numbers of his pursuers gave them a great advantage; and, to his dismay, he found himself so closely and accurately followed, that capture appeared inevitable.

"Had I but my knife," he exclaimed aloud, pausing in despair, "I would keep them off or die! Fool that I have been! Sentries on all sides! They have taken alarm! What can I do?"

"Go to Ciudad Real, if not too late," said a man, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a small three-cornered hat, who suddenly stepped from behind a massive stone column, close to where the student stood.

Federico at once recognised the speaker.

"For God's sake, Geronimo!" he cried, "assist me in this strait. If they catch me, I am lost. And hark! yonder they come! I hear the baying of the menial pack. On all sides the way is barred!"

Geronimo seized Federico's hand, and hurried him behind the pillar. "There is only one chance," he said; "muffle yourself in my cloak, take my hat, assume a stoop, and walk slowly, like an old man."

"What is your plan?" cried the student.

"Ask no questions. Do as I bid you. Do you see yonder door?"

"Of the palace?"

"Go in there."

"Into the palace?"

"Of course. Look neither right nor left; cross the first court to the great portal. There await me. Quick, quick—they come!" And he pushed him away.

Not without doubt and disquietude did Federico obey the orders of the old man, who displayed, in this conjuncture, a promptitude and decision rare at his age. But the student had no alternative. Wrapped in Regato's cloak, and feigning a feeble gait, he passed slowly and unquestioned before the soldiers of the royal guard. This impunity in a palace where the strictest watch and ward were usually kept, was an enigma to Federico; and he was still more puzzled, when, whilst waiting at the portal, several persons, shrouded like himself in dark cloaks, passed before him, greeting him as they went with a muttered "*buenas noches*," and disappeared in the corridors of the palace. At last came Geronimo. He had provided himself in the interval with another cloak. His appearance was an immense relief to the student.

"Are they gone?" said Federico. "May I venture out?"

"Thank the saints that you are here!" replied Geronimo. "And now, tell me what has happened."

Federico told his adventures; and old Regato listened to the narrative with marks of the strongest

interest. When he heard what the Count had said of him and of his probable fate, he laughed heartily. "Bah!" said he; "threatened men live long. I have had hotter broth cooked for me, and cooled it with my breath. I hope to die in my bed like a good Christian; and as for my chance of a rope, I would not change with his Excellency. The infernal schemer! I'll pay him off now. *Madre de todas gracias!* had we but the list of the conspirators, what a blow might be struck!"

"The list!" repeated Federico. "Stay, let me remember!" and, plunging his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a torn paper. "When I threw the man down, this remained sticking between my waistcoat and neckcloth, where he had grappled me. I noticed it when I got outside, and thrust it into my pocket."

Without listening to this explanation, Geronimo seized the paper, and, by the light of a lamp under the portal, examined it with eager curiosity. At sight of its contents, a savage joy sparkled in his eye.

"Ah, *maldito!*" he exclaimed with a laugh of triumph; "we have you now. Federico, the rose-coloured lady is ten times more surely yours than if you had remained in the closet and his Excellency had not discovered you. Follow, and be silent. Whatever happens, not a word till I bid you; then speak boldly, and tell what you know."

Through winding corridors, up and down stairs,

along galleries where sentries stood like statues, Geronimo led the way, until he reached a room whose door was opened by a gigantic lackey in the gaudy royal livery. Federico, who followed close upon his heels, suddenly found himself in the presence of a number of men, for the most part elderly and of grave respectable aspect, who stood in small knots about the apartment, or sat at tables on which were wine and refreshments, conversing in a low tone. Amongst these a hum of interest arose on Regato's entrance; and under cover of the attention he attracted, his companion passed unnoticed.

It at once flashed upon Federico, that he had penetrated into that notorious Camarilla or secret council of King Ferdinand VII., so much spoken of, so often cursed and scoffed at, so greatly feared and justly hated. This was the cringing and pernicious conclave of whose vile proceedings so many tales were told; these were the men, of all ranks and classes, who poured into the jealous despot's ear the venom of calumny and falsehood; these the spies and traitors who, by secret and insidious denunciations, brought sudden arrest and unmerited punishment upon their innocent fellow-citizens, and who kept the King advised of all that passed in Madrid, from the amorous intrigues of a grocer's wife, to the political ones concerted in the cabinet of the Infante Don Carlos.

The student's first uneasiness at finding himself

upon such new and perilous ground, vanished when he saw that he was wholly unheeded. He remembered to have heard that persons once admitted to the camarilla, and honoured by the King's confidence, were at liberty to return when they thought fit, at short or long intervals; and thus it might well happen that some of the members were unknown to each other. And on that night, those illicit counsellors of majesty were evidently preoccupied with some pressing and important matter. They crowded round Regato, took his arm, seized him by the button, whispered so eagerly, and questioned him so fast, that the little man lost all patience.

"Hands off, gentlemen!" he cried. "Which of you will buy me a new coat when you have torn mine? 'Tis true that this morning our gracious lord the King was very ill: but I hear that he is now better; and by the grace of our blessed Lady, he will rejoice his humble and loving slaves, and dispel their deep anxiety, by the sunshine of his presence."

The words had scarce left Geronimo's lips, when the opening of a side-door proved the signal for a respectful silence in the apartment. The whole assembly bowed profoundly, and preserved that posture, although no cause was yet apparent for such extraordinary greeting. At last one showed itself, in the person of a man who tottered slowly

and feebly into the room, supported on the arms of two attendants, his livid and bloated countenance distorted by a smile as painful to behold as if compelled by thumbscrews. The face of the new comer, who nodded in reply to the humble salutation of all present, might once have been handsome, but it could never have been intellectual or prepossessing, and now it was hideously cadaverous and ghastly. The features were those characterising a well-known family, world-renowned for the high places it has filled, rather than for the virtues or abilities of its members. The eyes were sunk deep in their sockets, the straight, scanty black hair shaded a brow blue and transparent from disease; the tall person and once well-formed limbs were swollen and unwieldy. The sick man's dress would have suited some plain burgher taking his ease in his summer-house: it consisted of a light nankeen jacket, a white neckcloth knotted loosely round the throat, linen trousers, and large shoes. He seemed scarcely able to set foot to ground, and the agony each step occasioned him betrayed itself in spasmodic twitchings of the nerves and muscles. Still there was a violent effort of the will to conceal the pangs that racked the enfeebled frame; a fruitless attempt to hide, by the assumption of smiling ease and gracious condescension, the approach of that equalising hour when human greatness and human misery sink to one level.

The sick man propped himself against a table, beside which stood an easy-chair, and with an affable wave of his hand, addressed the company.

"Good evening, señores!" he said: "we have felt ourselves somewhat unwell, and our careful physician Castillo, as also our trusty Grijalva, was solicitous on our account. But we would not put off this meeting. We love to meet our good friends, and are not to be kept from them by slight bodily inconvenience. Men fancy us more ailing than we are. You can refute such reports. What say you, Mexas—and you, Salcedo? Is our aspect so very sickly? We know that many build hopes upon our death; but they are mistaken, and by Our Lady, they shall be disappointed."

"God preserve our gracious lord a thousand years!" exclaimed several voices.

"An example should be made," said the man appealed to as Salcedo, "of the traitors who dare spread lying reports concerning the royal health."

"'Tis too true," observed another, "that such rumours are used to the most criminal ends."

"We will sit down," said the sick monarch. And with the assistance of his attendants, he deposited his exhausted person in the elbow-chair. "Drink, my friends, and tell me the news. Give me a cigar, good Castillo. Señor Regato, how goes it? what is new in our fair city of Madrid?"

"Little is heard," replied Geronimo, "save lamentations for the indisposition of our beloved master."

"The good people!" exclaimed Ferdinand. "We will have care of their happiness."

"And yet," said a little old man with a countenance of repulsive ugliness, "there be reprobates who laugh whilst all true and faithful subjects weep. There is my neighbour, the merchant Alvaro. Yesterday he married his daughter to a young nobleman, Don Francisco Palavar, who claims relationship with the Marquis of Santa Cruz. The wedding-guests were numerous; they sang and danced, and rejoiced beyond measure. Señor Alvaro, said I, are you not ashamed to be so joyous at such a time? 'Friend,' was his answer, 'let the times wag—they are certainly bad enough, but must soon change. All things have an end. We rejoice in hopes of a better future.'"

"The wretch!" exclaimed another of the camarilla. "I know him well; he was always a *negro*."

"A knave grown grey in the sins of the Exaltados," cried a third.

"He must be looked to," said the sick King. "Salcedo, what have you to tell?"

"I have gathered intelligence," replied Salcedo, "from an equerry of a certain illustrious personage." He paused and looked meaningly at the King, whose brow contracted, and whose lips muttered a well-

known name. "The equerry," Salcedo said, "tattled of great bustle and many visits at his master's palace. For days past its courtyard had been filled with carriages, bringing generals, ministers, dignitaries of the church, and many officers, chiefly of the Royal Guard." On hearing this, a feverish and uneasy flush reddened Ferdinand's pale countenance, and his dim eyes glared angrily.

"I know them," he said, "the old conspirators, the Catalan volunteers, the Agraviados. Why have I not heard this sooner? But I will take order with them. Ha, Tadeo!—you there? Why has this been kept from me?"

Uttering these last words, the King looked directly at the spot where Federico stood. So, at least, it seemed to the student, who, much confused, and apprehensive of discovery, averted his eyes from the royal gaze. But his embarrassment was exchanged for consternation, when he beheld, in the person addressed by Ferdinand as Tadeo his recent antagonist, the affianced of Rosaura. The Count, who stood at his elbow, gave him but one look, but that one comprised everything—astonishment, anger, hatred, confidence of power, and a fixed determination of revenge. A chill came over the poor student, and he debated in his mind whether to rush from the room, or to fall at the King's feet and reveal all he knew. His first surprise over, and seeing that Don Tadeo took no

further notice of him, he thought it wisest to follow Geronimo's directions and remain quiet.

"My gracious liege," said Tadeo to the King, with his usual gloomy decision of manner, "it was unnecessary to importune your majesty by such reports, seeing that they are merely lying devices of the evil-disposed. And even were it true that many visits are paid to that palace, its master has right and reason to receive them, without——"

By an impatient gesture, the King interrupted the speaker.

"It needs but to name the visitors," said Regato, with a quick sharp glance at Tadeo. "Eguia is one of them; San Juan, O'Donnel, Moreno, Caraval, are others."

"Has it not been remarked," said Mexas, with a sarcastic smile, "that in the apartments of a certain illustrious lady, meetings are also held, to which repair the Dukes of San Lorenzo and Fernando, Martinez de la Rosa, Cambronero, and many others? What can be said against that?"

A dead silence followed this bold remark: all knew well who the illustrious lady was who thus assembled round her the leaders of the Liberals. Suddenly the ominous pause was broken by the voice of Federico, to whom Regato had made a sign, significant although barely perceptible.

"Don Tadeo," cried the audacious student, his mellow manly tones ringing through the apart-

ment, "is a traitor to his King. This very night he delivered an all-important document to an agent of the Infante Don Carlos."

The words were an electric shock to the camarilla. The King started, and showed symptoms of extraordinary agitation. "What is that? Who says that?" he cried, rising from his chair with the vigour of sudden excitement. "Who knows of the document? where is it? Seize him—he shall explain—confess!"

"Seize the scoundrel," cried Tadeo, "who has dared intrude himself hither."

"My guards! my guards!" cried the King, his eyes rolling wildly, his features frightfully convulsed. "Where is the paper? Tadeo, I *will* have it back! Ha! what is this! mercy! blessed Virgin, mer——!" The word was unfinished; and Ferdinand, doubly tortured by bodily pain and mental anguish, fell back into the arms of his physician.

"The King is dead!" exclaimed Tadeo. "Help here!"

The camarilla crowded round Ferdinand, who lay without sense or motion. "What is it, Señor Castillo?" said Tadeo. The physician let fall his patient's wrist.

"A sudden paroxysm, your Excellency," he replied in a low voice. "It was to be apprehended —all is over!"

The Count turned away, and his eye fell upon Federico, who, seeing resistance useless, stood passive in the custody of several of the camarilla. With a vindictive frown, Tadeo pulled open the student's cloak, and pointed to his skirtless coat."

"You cannot deny it," he said. "The proof of your guilt is in my possession. Who is the fellow?"

Geronimo Regato stepped forward and stared in the student's face.

"What!" cried he, "is not that Don Federico, the young advocate, well-known in the coffee-houses as a virulent Exaltado, a determined scoffer, a propagator of atrocious doctrines?"

"I thought as much," said the Count. "None but such an unprincipled scoundrel would dare to act the spy in the very palace. Call the guard, and away with him to prison. Let this man be securely ironed," he added, to the soldiers who now entered; "and let none have speech of him."

The order was promptly obeyed. A very brief space elapsed before Federico found himself in a narrow dungeon, stretched on damp straw, with manacles on hands and feet. In total darkness, and seated despondingly upon his comfortless couch, the events of the evening appeared to him like some frightful nightmare. But in vain did he rub his eyes and try to awake from his imaginary sleep; the terrible reality forced itself upon him. He thought of Rosaura, the original cause of his mis-

fortunes, and almost doubted whether she were indeed a woman, or some demon in angel's form, sent to lure him to destruction. Of Geronimo, too, he thought with feelings of inexpressible bitterness. He, the friend in whom he had placed such implicit reliance, to betray him thus; for his own advantage, doubtless, and to draw his own head out of the noose! There were none, then, to whom he could now look for succour. The King was dead; his successor, the apostolical ruler, the partisan and defender of the Inquisition, whose name, for years past, had been the rallying-cry of the disaffected, owed his crown to the powerful Tadeo whom the student had offended and ill-treated, whose love he had dared to cross, whose revenge he must now encounter. Federico felt that his fate was sealed. Already he heard, in imagination, the clank of ponderous fetters in the dismal halls of the Inquisition; already he saw the terrible machines —the screws and weights, the ladder and iron couch, and felt the burning sulphur, as it was dropped hissing upon his naked flesh by the masked and pitiless executioner. He thought of Arguelles, the Divine, whom he had seen an animated corpse, his limbs crushed and distorted by similar tortures; and in spite of his natural courage, a shudder came over him as he heard the bars of his dungeon-door withdrawn, and the heavy bolts shot back into their

sockets. The next instant he closed his eyes, dazzled by a glare of light.

When he reopened them, the Count or Tadeo—whichever was his most fitting appellation—stood before him. With the courage of pride and despair, Federico boldly met his searching gaze. For some moments they looked at each other in silence, broken at last by Tadeo.

"I come to question you," he said: "answer truly, and your captivity may be very brief. Deceive me, and your life shall be yet shorter. Your crimes shall meet their just reward."

"I am guilty of no crime," retorted Federico. "I am the victim of circumstances."

"And what are they?" eagerly inquired the Count.

Federico was silent.

"Do you know me, señor?" said the Count.

"No," was the reply.

"Beware, then, lest you learn to know me too well. What did you, concealed in yonder closet? Where is the paper you robbed me of? Who admitted you into the house? Do you belong to a secret society? Were you sent as a spy? A dagger was found in the closet: did you come to assassinate me?"

He paused after each question, but Federico answered none of them, save the last, to which he replied by a stern negative. "You had best con-

fess," resumed Tadeo. "If you are no political offender, if no criminal project led you where I found you, I pledge my word, señor—and I pledge it only to what I can and will perform—you shall at once be released."

"I can say but this," replied the prisoner—"it was not my object to overhear you. An accident conducted me where you discovered me, and I heartily regret that a casual noise betrayed my presence."

"Is that all you will say?"

"All."

"You know not with whom you deal," cried the Count. Then, lowering his voice, and with a smile that he strove to render amiable. "It was, perhaps, a love-affair," he said. "Young man, which of Doña Rosaura's handmaidens did you seek? Who introduced you into that apartment? Tell me this—satisfy me on a point that concerns myself personally—and not only will I forget all, but remain your debtor."

Whilst thus he spoke, the Count's features expressed very different sentiments from those announced by his smooth and placable speech. In their convulsive workings, and in the savage fire of his eyes, jealousy and hatred were plainly to be read; he looked like a tiger about to spring upon its prey.

"Señor," said Federico, contemptuously, "you

waste time. If a lady did introduce me into your house, rest assured I am not base enough to reveal her name. From me you get no further answer. Do with me as you will. In this unhappy land, might is above right."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the Count, fiercely advancing upon his undaunted captive, "you have betrayed yourself. I will destroy you, knave, like an insect. A lady conceal you! What audacious slander is this?" He struggled with his rage, and, mastering himself, resumed: "It has been proved that you are the spy of a dangerous and treasonable association. Where is the paper you stole?"

"I have no paper," replied Federico, "and will answer no more questions. I am in your power; do your worst."

The Count stepped to the dungeon door. Two men entered. Whilst one of them searched Federico, closely examining each pocket and fold of his dress, but without discovering the much-coveted document, the other listened respectfully to the Count, who gave him instructions in a low voice. His last words, which reached the ear of the student, were not calculated to reassure him as to the future. "Be it so," said Don Tadeo. "The necessary warrant shall at once be made out, and then—despatch." And with a vindictive glance at his prisoner, he left the prison.

It was some consolation to the unfortunate Federico, when again in dismal solitude, and with the prospect of a cruel death before his eyes, to reflect on the firmness he had shown, and on the agony of jealous doubt he had inflicted on his rival. In his defenceless and desperate circumstances, such revenge was doubly sweet; and for a while he dwelt on it with pleasure. Then his thoughts took other direction, and an active and excited imagination transported him from that gloomy cell to the chamber of the beautiful cause of his misfortunes. She knelt before a crucifix, and wept and prayed for him. He heard her breathe his name, and invoke the saints to his assistance; and in a transport of love and gratitude he extended his arms to clasp her to his heart. They were rudely checked by the chain that linked them to the wall. And now pale spectres flitted through the gloom, and grinned at him with their skeleton mouths, and murmured in his ear that he must die, and never again see her whose kiss was yet hot upon his lips. And the last ominous words and deadly look of his foe recurred to him, chasing all hope. Who would miss him, the humble and friendless student? who inquire where or how he had met his fate? Far greater than he, the wealthy, the titled, the powerful, had met the fate he anticipated, at hangman's hands, in the dark and silent recesses of Spanish dungeons. To the long list of illustrious victims, he, an insig-

nificant one, would be added unnoticed. And the remembrance of those who had preceded him, ennobling an ignominious death, gave Federico courage. "Yes!" he exclaimed aloud, "I will *die as so many great and good men have died* before me! Would that I had done service to my poor oppressed country, something to deserve the tyrant's hate! But for thee, Rosaura, will I gladly perish, and to thee only shall my last sigh be given."

His words yet echoed in the dungeon, when he heard steps at the door, and its fastenings again withdrawn. This time he doubted not it was his death-warrant and the executioner. Nerving himself to endure the worst, he gazed sternly and steadily at his visitors.

"That is he," said the turnkey, to a tall, sullen-looking man.

"Take off his chains," was the answer; "and you, señor, follow me."

"Quick with your work," cried Federico. "Call your aids. I am prepared."

"Silence and follow!" harshly replied the stranger. "Lucky for you if you are prepared for all."

Without the dungeon stood a third man, muffled in a short mantle. Federico shuddered. "Another of the hangman brood!" he murmured. "Lead on, I fear thee not!" The man followed

without a word. After traversing several corridors, they ascended a lofty staircase. Behind each door Federico fancied a torture chamber or a garrote, but none of them revealed what he expected. At last his conductor paused.

"Are you ready," he said, "to appear before your Supreme Judge?"

"I am ready," Federico solemnly replied.

"Then enter here."

A door opened, the student set foot across the threshold, and hardly restrained a cry of surprise. Instead of the garrote, instead of racks and torturers, he beheld a gorgeous saloon, brilliantly lighted up with a profusion of wax tapers. Five or six men of distinguished mien and elegant appearance, with stars and orders upon their breasts, were grouped round a large carved chair, and looked curiously and expectantly at Federico. But he scarcely observed them. Even on a lady of great beauty and majestic aspect, who sat in the chair, wrapped in a costly mantle of embroidered velvet, his attention was fixed but for an instant, for behind her stood another lady, somewhat pale and anxious-looking, but who yet bore so strong a resemblance to the cause of his sufferings, to her of the rose-coloured robe, to Rosaura herself, that all the blood in his veins rushed to his heart. Her name hovered on his lips, and, forgetting everything but love and newly-revived hope, he was

about to spring forward and throw himself at her feet, when the lady in the chair addressed him:

"Remain there, señor," she said, with a smile and gracious movement of her head, as if she divined the impulse to which the impetuous student so nearly yielded. "You have had strange adventures, I am told, within the last few hours. They will terminate happily for you, if you tell the whole truth, and relate without reserve all that has occurred. Where have you passed this night? What took you to the house in which you were found hidden? What heard you there?"

"Señora," replied Federico, respectfully but firmly, "I have already preferred death to the revelation of a secret that is not mine. My resolution is unchanged. I can answer no questions."

The lady cast a friendly and approving glance at the steadfast youth.

"Now, by Our Lady!" she said, turning to the gentlemen around her, "this is a chivalrous fidelity, right pleasant to behold in these unchivalrous days. I doubt not, young sir, that the lady of your affections will know how to repay it. But here are great interests at stake, and your excuse may not avail. You must relate all, truly and without reserve. And to remove your scruples, know that the secret you have so bravely kept is no longer one for any here present. Proceed!"

A look from Rosaura confirmed this assurance,

and without further hesitation Federico told his adventures, and repeated the dialogue he had heard from the closet. At times the listeners seemed surprised; at times they smiled, or looked significantly at each other, and spoke together in brief whispers. Twice had the student to tell his tale, and his words were taken down by one of the gentlemen present. That done, the lady rose quickly from her chair, laid a hand upon his shoulder, and, fixing her keen bright eyes searchingly upon his face, pointed to the deposition.

"Can you swear to that?" she cried. "Is it all true? Before God and his saints, did all pass as you have said? No word too much or too little? Saw you the document with your own eyes? *Santa Madre!* Is it possible? Surely it cannot be; and yet—my friends, what say you? What think you, Duke of San Fernando, and you, Marquis of Santa Cruz? What says his Grace of San Lorenzo, and our discreet friend, Martinez de la Rosa? No, I need not fear, whilst thus surrounded by the best and wisest in the land. Cambronero, advise us. How may we defeat the machinations of our crafty foes?"

The gentleman who had written down the deposition, raised his head, and Federico recognised the features of one renowned throughout Spain as a wise counsellor and learned lawyer. With surprise and respect the student gazed at the distinguished and illustrious persons he had just heard named.

"Much depends," said Cambronero, "on his Majesty's health. If unhappily he departs this life without regaining consciousness, we must recover the surreptitiously obtained document at point of sword. No other course will then be open to us. But if, by God's gracious mercy, the King's senses return, not a moment must be lost in obtaining from his hand a revocation of the act. He must be told everything; he must be shown how his confidence has been abused, and what base advantage has been taken of a momentary weakness. He must hear the witnesses whom Heaven has raised up for your Majesty."

"Ha!" cried the lady, with an impatient and energetic gesture, "you are right, Cambronero; we must act! All that can be done, Christina will do. They shall not triumph by weakness of hers! Don Fernando still lives, can yet retract. He shall hear how they have laboured to bring shame upon his name; shall learn the perfidy of those who have environed him with their snares! I go to tell him."

The Queen left the room. "To me it seems, señores," said Cambronero, a quiet smile playing on his shrewd features, "that things have happened for the best, and that the result of all this is not doubtful, provided only the king be not already dead. The Apostolicals have been active. Their creatures have worked their way into the cabinet

and the camarilla. The guards, the captains-general, and many officers of state are long since gained over. In all cases, on King Ferdinand's death, a war is inevitable. The succession to the throne is a Gordian knot, to be cut only by the sword. The Infante will never yield his claim, or admit as valid the abrogation of the ancient Salic law.* And doubtless the crown would be his, were not the people and the spirit of the times opposed to him. He is retrograde; the Spain of to-day is and must be progressive. The nation is uneasy; it hates despotic government; it ferments from north to south, from Portugal to the Mediterranean; but that fermentation would lack a rallying point without the decree which commands all to cling to Christina and her children, and repel the Infante. The partisans of Carlos have striven to obtain by craft what they could not hope to conquer by the strong hand, and they have succeeded in making a dying monarch revoke in a moment of delirium or imbecility that all-important act. The revocation is in the hands of the Infante; the Salic law is once more the law of the land, and Christina's children are in their turn disinherited. And if it be impossible to restore the King to consciousness, I fear——"

"What?" cried the Marquis of Santa Cruz.

* By the Pragmatic Sanction, promulgated during the first pregnancy of Christina, in May 1830.

"That we are on the eve of a great revolution."

"Hush!" said the Duke of San Lorenzo, looking anxiously around him. "These are dangerous words, my friend." And his eye fell upon the handsome countenance of Martinez de la Rosa, who smiled thoughtfully.

"Call it reform, Cambronero," he said; "wise progress of the times, moderate, cautious, adapted to the circumstances; not rash, reckless, sweeping revolution."

The lawyer cast a keen glance at the former minister of the Cortes.

"Reform!" he cried. "Ay, certainly; but what reform? Does Señor de la Rosa mean such reform as he helped to bring about? I bid him beware: these are no times for trifling. Here we stand, but a few paces from the deathbed of a powerful prince. He fettered this revolution or reform; but, señores, it was only for a while and in appearance. Like the mole, it has laboured and advanced, surely and unseen. Happy for our king if he expire before the vanity of his efforts, and the inutility of the bloodshed and misery they have occasioned, are demonstrated; before he learns that a principle never dies, though all the artillery of the world be brought to bear upon it. History judges the dead; nations judge the living. Let us so act that we may stand with honour before both tribunals."

"The subject leads us too far," said the poet and minister, rising from his chair and glancing at Federico, who, struck and delighted by Cambronero's words, gazed at him with expanded brow and flashing eyes. "Let us beware of kindling fanaticism : coolness and prudence are becoming to men, and, God knows, we need both."

He took Cambronero's arm, and led him to the other end of the spacious apartment. The noblemen followed, and the conversation was resumed in a lower tone. So enthralling had been the interest with which Federico had listened to the words of these influential Liberals, that for an instant he had neglected Rosaura, who stood nearly concealed behind the swelling cushions and high gilt back of the throne-like chair. Her beautiful face wore an anxious, inquiring expression, which seemed to reproach him with forgetting her; but as he drew near, she smiled, and rays of love and hope broke from beneath her long dark lashes. And under the magic influence of those beaming eyes, Federico's doubts and fears vanished like frost before the mid-day sun, and were replaced by a transport of blissful emotion.

"Rosaura!" he exclaimed, "what unspeakable joy is this! Strange, indeed, have been the events of the night! The wonders of Arabian tales are realised. A moment ago I awaited death in a dungeon; and behold, I am in a king's chamber,

and at your feet, Rosaura. Explain these things, adored mistress of my heart! How do we thus meet? How came you hither?"

"With our friend, Geronimo Regato," replied the lady.

"The traitor!" indignantly exclaimed Federico. "No thanks to him if I escape with life."

"Judge not so hastily," cried Rosaura: "you know not all you owe Regato. From him I first heard your name. He was my confidant; he knew my aversion to the detested man, who considered me already his own. My father, of an old family, although not of the highest nobility, was President of the Burgos Tribunal, and by commercial transactions, in the time of the Constitution, he acquired great wealth. My hated suitor is also sprung from the people. My father was his friend, and at one time had to thank his influence for escape from persecution. Out of gratitude he promised him my hand, and, dying a year ago, left him my guardian. In that capacity he administered my estates, and had me in his power. But, thanks to the Virgin, I am at last free from his odious control."

She gazed tenderly at Federico, and held out her hand, which he covered with kisses. But she hastily withdrew it, on becoming aware that their proceedings were observed by the group of politicians.

"Is this the time and place?" she said, with a smile of sweet confusion and arch reproach. "And

yet, Federico, best beloved, why should I feign indifference, or conceal that my heart is wholly yours?"

"Angel!" cried the enraptured student, trembling with ecstasy.

"Hush!" whispered Rosaura. "Cambronero looks and laughs at us. Hear me, Federico. The decisive moment approaches; but I fear it not—I love and hope. It was Geronimo, disguised as a Gallego, who brought you to my abode; Geronimo hates him whom we hate; he knew me as a child, was my father's friend, and loves us both. He spoke to me of you long before I saw you; he told me the hour of your walks in the Prado. At the first glance I recognised you."

"And where is that singular man?" Federico inquired.

"I know not, but doubtless at no great distance. This night, a few hours ago, I lay sleepless on my pillow, anxious for your fate, when a carriage stopped at the door. It was surrounded with guards and torch-bearers, and I was told that my presence was instantly required at the palace. My alarm at so untimely a summons was dissipated by the arrival of Geronimo. 'Fear nothing,' he said: 'the hour of happiness is at hand. He whom you hate is vanquished. Federico is his conqueror.'"

"I his conqueror!" cried the student. And then, recalling all that had occurred, "strange

destiny!" he continued. "Yes, I now see that the secret intrigues of a dangerous and powerful man have been revealed by my means. But who is he? I in vain conjecture."

"You do not know him?" cried Rosaura, greatly astonished—"not know——?" She suddenly paused, for at that moment the door burst open, and the Queen entered the room, in extreme haste and violent agitation.

"His Majesty is recovered," she exclaimed, her voice shrill and quivering with contending emotions; "his swoon is over, God's grace be thanked. I have spoken, my noble friends, and not in vain. The King will himself hear the witnesses. These young people must come with me. Call Geronimo Regato. Remain here, Cambronero, and all of you: I must see you again, I need your counsel—desert me not!"

"When your Majesty next honours us with your presence," said Cambronero, bowing low, and raising his voice, "it will be as Queen-Regent of Spain."

Regato entered the room, and Federico rubbed his eyes in fresh astonishment. It was the same man in the dark mantle who had followed him from his dungeon to the Queen's audience chamber, and whom he had taken for an executioner. Gradually the mysteries of the night unravelled themselves. He understood that if Regato had accused him, it

had been to avert suspicion from himself, and that he might work more effectually for both, by revealing to the Queen or to Cambronero what he had learned from Federico, and by placing before them the list of the conspirators. Musing upon this, and each moment more convinced of Geronimo's wisdom and good faith, he followed the Queen, who, with rapid step, led him and Rosaura through a suite of splendid apartments. Stopping before a door, she turned to the student.

"Speak fearlessly," she said: "suppress no word of truth, and reckon on my favour and protection."

Federico bowed. The door turned noiselessly on its hinges, and the Queen paused a moment as in anger and surprise, whilst a dark glow flushed her excited and passionate countenance. From the door a view was commanded of the whole apartment, which was dimly lighted, and occupied by several persons, standing in a half-circle, round a bed placed near a marble chimney-piece. Upon this bed, propped by cushions into a half-sitting posture, lay Ferdinand VII., his suffering features and livid complexion looking ghastly and spectral in the faint light, and contrasted with the snow-white linen of his pillow. A black-robed priest knelt at his feet, and mumbled the prayer for the dying; Castillo the physician held his arm, and reckoned the slow throbs of the feeble pulse. At

His remonstrance was cut short, for, quick as lightning, the ungovernable Infanta raised her hand, and let it fall upon his face with such vigour and good-will that the minister, unprepared for so unwomanly an assault, staggered backwards, and narrowly avoided a fall.

"Carlotta!" cried the Queen, seizing her sister's arm, and restraining her from further violence.

"The villain! the traitor!" shrieked the Infanta, in tones that resounded through the palace.

"Away with him from my sight!" cried Ferdinand, his voice growing fainter as he spoke. "The Queen, whom I appoint Regent during my illness, will decide upon his fate. I myself strip him of all offices and honours. Away with him, and for ever! You are no longer my minister, TADEO CALOMARDE. Oh, God! what a bitter deception! He too! He too! By all the saints, he shall rue it. His treachery is my death-stroke!"

The King sank back like a corpse upon his cushions, but presently recovered himself, and with all speed, before the assembled ministers, the extorted decree was annulled, the Pragmatic Sanction again declared in full force, and the Queen nominated Regent. Whilst this took place, Federico, unheeded in the bustle of such important business, remained like one entranced. It was Calomarde, then, the man whose ruthless hand had been so pitilessly stretched forth over the suffering land—it was the

all-powerful minister, the curse of Spain, the butcher of the noble Torrijos and his unhappy companions, whom he, the insignificant student, had cast down from his high state! The giant had succumbed before the pigmy; the virtual ruler of the kingdom had fallen by the agency of one whom, a day previously, he might with impunity have annihilated. Events so extraordinary and of such rapid occurrence were hard to comprehend; and Federico had scarcely convinced himself of their reality, when he received, a few hours afterwards, a summons to the Queen's presence.

The morning sun shone into the royal apartment, revealing the traces of a sleepless night and recent agitation upon the handsome features of the newly-made Regent. She received the student with a smile, and placed Rosaura's hand in his.

"Fear nothing from Calomarde," she said. "He has fled his well-merited punishment. Those sent for his arrest sought him in vain. You are under my protection, Rosaura—and you also, Don Federico. You have established a lasting claim upon my gratitude, and my friendship shall never fail you."

It does not appear how long these fair promises were borne in mind by a queen whose word, since that time, has been far oftener pledged than redeemed. Perhaps she thought she had acquitted herself of all obligations when, three months later, she honoured with her presence the nuptials of

Federico and Rosaura, and with her own hand twined a costly wreath of brilliants through the sable ringlets of the beautiful bride. And perhaps the young couple neither needed nor desired further marks of her favour, for they withdrew from Madrid to reside in happy retirement upon Rosaura's estates. Geronimo Regato went with them; and for a while was their welcome guest. But his old habits were too confirmed to be eradicated, even by the influence of those he loved best. The atmosphere of a court, the excitement of political intrigue, were essential to his existence, and he soon returned to the capital. There, under a very different name from that by which he has here been designated, he played an important part in the stirring epoch that succeeded the death of Ferdinand the Well-beloved.

ADVENTURE IN THE NORTH-WEST TERRITORY.

[*MAGA.* SEPTEMBER 1821.]

AFTER residing nearly a year in one of the most distant posts of the North-west Company, and conducting the fur trade there, I began to look forward to my return to Montreal. I waited with the greatest impatience for the arrival of the period which was to terminate my banishment, and restore me to society. I was nearly three thousand miles distant from any settlements, and my only companions were two young men, clerks of the establishment, whose characters, and limited acquirements, rendered them very uninteresting associates. My situation was one of considerable responsibility. A great number of Canadians, in the service of the Company, resided at the post, and were under my control; but I found it a very difficult matter to keep them in a state of due subordination, and to prevent them from quarrelling and fighting with the detached parties of Indians that occasionally visited us for the purpose of trading. Interest and personal

safety alike required that we should be on friendly terms with the natives; and I spent many anxious hours in endeavouring to promote mutual peace and good-humour.

Our post was situated upon the banks of a small lake, about sixteen miles broad. This lake discharged itself by means of a river into another of much greater dimensions, and thick forests covered every part of the neighbouring country.

One afternoon I took my gun, and strolled out in search of game. Though it was now the beginning of spring, the lake was still frozen completely across, the cold of the preceding winter having been very intense. I soon fell in with a flock of wild ducks, but before I could get a shot at them, they began to fly towards the middle of the lake; however, I followed them fearlessly over the ice, in the expectation that they would soon alight. The weather was mild, though rather blowy. Detached black clouds moved rapidly along the face of Heaven in immense masses, and the sun blazed forth in unobscured splendour at one moment, and was completely shrouded from the eye the next. I was so intent on the pursuit of my game that I hastened forwards almost unconsciously, my progress being much facilitated by a thin layer of snow which covered the ice, and rendered the footing tolerably secure. At last I fired at the ducks, and killed one and wounded another. I immediately picked up the

first, but its companion, having only been winged, began to leap away before I caught hold of it. I followed, but had not advanced more than twenty yards, when, to my astonishment, I found that the ice was in many places covered with water to the depth of several inches. I stopped short full of alarm, and irresolute what to do. It was evident that a thaw had already commenced, and as I well knew with what rapidity the ice broke up when once affected by a change of temperature, I became alive to all the dangers of my situation, and almost shuddered at the thought of moving from the spot on which I stood.

The weather had grown calm and hazy, and the sky was very black and lowering. Large flakes of snow soon began to fall languidly and perpendicularly through the air; and after a little time, these were accompanied by a thick shower of sleety rain, which gradually became so dense that I could not discern the shore. I strained my eyes to catch a glance of some living object, but a dreary and motionless expanse stretched around me on every side, and the appalling silence that prevailed was sometimes interrupted by the receding cries of the wounded bird. All nature seemed to be awaiting some terrible event. I listened in fearful suspense, though I knew not what I expected to hear. I soon distinguished a distant thundering noise, which gradually became stronger, and appeared to

approach the place where I stood.' Repeated explosions, and hollow murmurings of irregular loudness, were succeeded by a tremendous sound, like that of rocks bursting asunder. The ice trembled beneath my feet, and the next moment it was disunited by a vast chasm, which opened itself within a few yards of me. The water of the lake rushed upwards through the gap with foaming fury, and began to flood the surface all around.

I started backwards, and ran, as I conceived, towards the shore; but my progress was soon stopped by one of those weak parts of the ice called *air-holes*. While walking cautiously round it, my mind grew somewhat composed, and I resolved not to advance any farther until I had fixed upon some way of regulating my course; but I found this to be impossible. I vainly endeavoured to discern land, and the moaning of the wind among the distant forests alone indicated that there was any at all near me. Strong and irregular blasts, loaded with snow and sleet, swept wildly along, involving everything in obscurity, and bewildering my steps with malignant influence. I sometimes fancied I saw the spot where our post was situated, and even the trees and houses upon it; but the next moment a gust of wind would whirl away the fantastic-shaped fogs that had produced the agreeable illusion, and reduce me to actionless despair. I fired my gun repeatedly, in the hope that the report would bring

some one to my assistance; however, the shores alone acknowledged, by feeble echoes, that the sound had reached them.

The storm increased in violence, and at intervals the sound of the ice breaking up rolled upon my ear like distant thunder, and seemed to mutter appalling threats. Alarm and fatigue made me dizzy, and I threw down my gun and rushed forwards in the face of the drifting showers, which were now so thick as to affect my respiration. I soon lost all sense of fear, and began to feel a sort of frantic delight in struggling against the careering blasts. I hurried on, sometimes running along the brink of a circular opening in the ice, and sometimes leaping across frightful chasms—all the while unconscious of having any object in view. The ice everywhere creaked under my feet, and I knew that death awaited me, whether I fled away or remained on the same spot. I felt as one would do, if forced by some persecuting fiend to range over the surface of a black and shoreless ocean; and aware, that whenever his tormentor withdrew his sustaining power, he would sink down and be suffocated among the billows that struggled beneath him.

At last night came on, and, exhausted by fatigue and mental excitement, I wrapped myself in my cloak, and lay down upon the ice. It was so dark that I could not have moved one step without running the risk of falling into the lake. I almost wished that the

drowsiness produced by intense cold would begin to affect me; but I did not feel in the slightest degree chilled, and the temperature of the air was in reality above freezing. I had lain only a few minutes when I heard the howl of a wolf. The sound was indescribably delightful to my ear, and I started up with the intention of hastening to the spot from whence it seemed to proceed; but, hopeless as my situation then was, my heart shrunk within me when I contemplated the dangers I would encounter in making such an attempt. My courage failed, and I resumed my former position, and listened to the undulations of the water as they undermined and beat against the lower part of the ice on which I lay.

About midnight the storm ceased, and most of the clouds gradually forsook the sky, while the rising moon dispelled the darkness that had previously prevailed. However, a thick haze covered the heavens, and rendered her light dim and ghastly, and similar to that shed during an eclipse. A succession of noises had continued with little interruption for several hours, and at last the ice beneath me began to move. I started up, and, on looking around, saw that the whole surface of the lake was in a state of agitation. My eyes became dim, and I stretched out my arms to catch hold of some object, and felt as if all created things were passing away. The hissing, grinding, and crashing, produced by

the different masses of ice coming into collision, were tremendous. Large fragments sometimes got wedged together, and impeded the progress of those behind them, which being pushed forward by others still farther back, were forced upon the top of the first, and fantastic-shaped pyramids and towers could be indistinctly seen rising among the mists of night, and momentarily changing their forms, and finally disorganising themselves with magical rapidity and fearful tumult. At other times, an immense mass of ice would start up into a perpendicular position, and continue gleaming in the moonshine for a little period, and then vanish like a spectre among the abyss of waters beneath it. The piece of ice on which I had first taken my position happened to be very large and thick, but other fragments were soon forced above it, and formed a mound six or seven feet high, on the top of which I stood, contemplating the awful scene around me, and feeling as if I no longer had the least connection with the world, or retained anything human or earthly in my composition.

The wind, which was pretty strong, drove the ice down the lake very fast. My alarms and anxieties had gradually become less intense, and I was several times overcome by a sort of stupor; during the continuance of which, imagination and reality combined their distracting influence. At one time I fancied that the snow still drifted as

violently as ever, and that I distinguished, through its hazy medium, a band of Indian chiefs walking past me upon the surface of the lake. Their steps were noiseless, and they went along with wan and dejected looks and downcast eyes, and paid no attention to my exclamations and entreaties for relief. At another, I thought I was floating in the middle of the ocean, and that a blazing sun flamed in the cloudless sky, and made the ice which supported me melt so fast that I heard streams of water pouring from its sides, and felt myself every moment descending towards the surface of the billows. I was usually wakened from such dreams by some noise or violent concussion, but always relapsed into them whenever the cause of disturbance ceased to operate.

The longest and last of these slumbers was broken by a terrible shock which my ice island received, and which threw me from my seat, and nearly precipitated me into the lake. On regaining my former position, and looking round, I perceived, to my joy and astonishment, that I was in a river. The water between me and the shore was still frozen over, and was about thirty yards wide, consequently the fragment of ice on which I stood could not approach any nearer than this. After a moment of irresolution, I leaped upon the frozen surface, and began to run towards the bank of the river. My feet seemed scarcely to touch the ice, so great was

my terror lest it should give way beneath me; but I reached the shore in safety, and dropped down completely exhausted by fatigue and agitation.

It was now broad daylight, but I neither saw animals nor human beings, nor any vestiges of them. Thick forests covered the banks of the river, and extended back as far as my eye could reach. I feared to penetrate them, lest I should get bewildered in their recesses, and accordingly walked along the edge of the stream. It was not long before I discovered a column of smoke rising among the trees. I immediately directed my steps towards the spot, and, on reaching it, found a party seated round a fire.

They received me with an air of indifference and unconcern, not very agreeable or encouraging to one in my destitute condition. However, I placed myself in their circle, and tried to discover to what tribe they belonged, by addressing them in the different Indian languages with which I was acquainted. I soon made myself intelligible, and related the circumstances that had brought me so unexpectedly among them. At the conclusion of my narrative, the men pulled their tomahawk pipes from their mouths, and looked at each other with incredulous smiles. I did not make any attempt to convince them of the truth of what I said, knowing it would be vain to do so, but asked for something to eat. After some deliberation, they gave me a

small quantity of pemican, but with an unwillingness that did not evince such a spirit of hospitality as I had usually met with among Indians.

The party consisted of three men, two women, and a couple of children, all of whom sat or lay near the fire in absolute idleness; and their minds seemed to be as unoccupied as their bodies, for nothing resembling conversation ever passed between them. The weather was dreary and comfortless. A thick small rain, such as usually falls in North America during a thaw, filled the air, and the wigwam under which we sat afforded but an imperfect shelter from it. I passed the time in the most gloomy and desponding reflections. I saw no means by which I could return to the trading-post, and the behaviour of the Indians made me doubt if they would be inclined to grant me that support and protection without which I could not long exist. One man gazed upon me so constantly and steadily that his scrutiny annoyed me, and attracted my particular attention. He appeared to be the youngest of the party, and was very reserved and unprepossessing in his aspect, and seemed to know me, but I could not recollect of ever having seen him before.

In the afternoon the rain ceased, and the Indians began to prepare for travelling. When they had accoutred themselves, they all rose from the ground without speaking a word, and walked away, one

man taking the lead. I perceived that they did not intend that I should be of the party, but I followed them immediately, and, addressing myself to the person who preceded the others, told him that I must accompany them, as I neither could live in the woods alone nor knew in what part of the country I was. He stopped and surveyed me from head to foot, saying, "Where is your gun? where is your knife? where is your tomahawk?" I replied, that I had lost them among the ice. "My friend," returned he, "don't make the Great Spirit angry by saying what is not. That man knows who you are," pointing to the Indian who had observed me so closely. "We all know who you are. You have come to trade with us, and I suppose your companions have concealed themselves at a distance, lest the appearance of a number of white men should intimidate us. They are right. Experience has taught us to fear white men; but their art, not their strength, makes us tremble. Go away; we do not wish to have any transactions with you. We are not to be betrayed or overpowered by liquid fire,* or anything else you can offer us. None of us shall harm you. I have spoken the truth, for I have not two mouths."

When he had finished this oration, he remained silent, and I felt at a loss what to reply. At last I repeated my story, and endeavoured to convince

* Spirituous liquors.

him that I neither had any companions nor was at all in a situation to trade with his people, or do them the slightest injury. He listened calmly to my arguments, and seemed to think there was some weight in them; and the young man already mentioned stepped forward and said, "Let the stranger go with us: the bones of my father cry out against our leaving him behind. I am young, but I dare to advise. Listen for once to the counsels of Thakakawerenté." The first speaker then waved his hand, as a signal that I should follow them, and the whole party proceeded in the same order as before.

Our leader pushed forward, apparently without the least hesitation, though, accustomed as I was to the woods, I could not discover the slightest trace of a footpath. He sometimes slackened his pace for a few moments, and looked thoughtfully at the trees, and then advanced as fast as before. None of the party spoke a word, and the rustling of the dry leaves under their feet was the only sound that disturbed the silence of the forest. Though freed from the fear of perishing for want, I could not reflect upon my situation without uneasiness and alarm; and my chance of being able to return to the post seemed to diminish every step I took. I felt excessively fatigued, not having enjoyed any natural or composed sleep the preceding night, and the roughness of the ground over which

we passed added to my weariness in an intolerable degree; but I could not venture to rest by the way, lest I should lose sight of the Indians for ever.

Soon after sunset we stopped for the night, and the men set about erecting a wigwam, while the women kindled a fire. One of our party had killed a small deer in the course of our journey, and he immediately proceeded to skin the animal, that a portion of it might be dressed for supper. When the venison was ready, they all sat down and partook of it, and a liberal allowance was handed to me; but the same silence prevailed that had hitherto been observed among them, and the comforts of a plentiful repast after a long journey did not appear in the least degree to promote social communication. The meal being finished, the men filled their pipes with odoriferous herbs, and began to smoke in the most sedate manner, and the women prepared beds by spreading skins upon the ground. The composed demeanour of the party harmonised well with the silence and gloominess of the night; and it seemed that the awful solitude of the forests in which they lived, and the sublime and enduring forms under which nature continually presented herself to their eyes, had impressed them with a sense of their own insignificance, and of the transitoriness of their daily occupations and enjoyments, and rendered them thoughtful, taciturn, and unsusceptible. I seated myself at the root of a large tree

near the wigwam, and continued observing its inmates, till, overcome by fatigue, I snak into a deep sleep.

About midnight I was awakened by some one pulling my hand, and, on looking up, I perceived the Indian who had opposed my accompanying them, and whose name was Outalisso, standing beside me. He put his finger on his lips, by way of enjoining silence, and motioned that I should rise and follow him. I obeyed, and he led me behind a large tree which grew at a little distance from the wigwam, and said, in a low voice, "Listen to me, my friend.—I told you that you would receive no harm from us; and shall I belie my words? Thakakawerenté, who requested that you might be allowed to follow our steps, says that his father was murdered by a party of people under your command, about nine moons ago. This may be true, and you at the same time may be guiltless; for we cannot always control those who are placed under our authority. He tells me that the spirit of the old man has twice appeared to him in his dreams to-night, desiring him to put you to death. He has gone to repose himself again, and if his father visits him a third time during sleep, he will certainly kill you whenever he awakes. You must therefore hasten away, if you wish to live any longer." "What can I do?" cried I; "death awaits me whether I remain here or fly from Thakakawerenté.

It is impossible for me to reach home alone." "Be patient," returned Outalisso, "and I will try to save you. Not far from hence, the roots of a large oak, which has been blown down by the wind, stretch high into the air, and may be seen at a great distance. You must go there, and wait till I come to you. Keep the mossy side of the trees on your left hand, and you will find the place without any difficulty."

Outalisso motioned me to hurry away, and I departed with a palpitating heart, and plunged into the recesses of the forest, and regulated my course in the manner he directed. The moon was rising, and I could see to a considerable distance around. The rustling of the dry leaves among my feet often made me think that some one walked close behind me, and I scarcely dared to look back, lest I should see an uplifted tomahawk descending upon my head. I sometimes fancied I observed Thakakawerenté lurking among the brushwood, and stopped short till imagination conjured up his form in a different part of the forest, and rendered me irresolute which phantom I should endeavour to avoid.

I reached the tree sooner than I expected: it lay along the ground, and its immense roots projected from the trunk, at right angles, to the height of twelve or fourteen feet, their interstices being so filled with earth that it was impossible to see through them.

I sat down, and found the agitation of my spirits gradually subside under the tranquillising influence of the scene. Not a breath of wind shook the trees, the leafless and delicately-fibred boughs of which, when viewed against the cloudless sky, seemed like a sable-network spread overhead. The nests which the birds had made the preceding summer still remained among the branches, silent, deserted, and unsheltered, making the loneliness of the forest, as it were, visible to the mind; while a withered leaf sometimes dropped slowly down—a sad memorial of the departed glories of the vegetable world. A small rivulet ran within a little distance of me, but its course was so concealed by long grass that I would have been aware of its existence by the murmuring of its waters only, had it not glittered dazzlingly in the moonshine at one spot, while flowing over a large smooth stone. When I looked into the recesses of the forest, I saw the trees ranged before each other like colossal pillars, and gradually blending their stems together, until they formed a dark and undefined mass. In some places, a scathed trunk, whitened with the moss of successive centuries, stood erect in spectral grandeur, like a being whom immense age and associations, riveted to long-past times, had isolated from the sympathies of his fellow-mortals. As the moon gradually rose on the arch of heaven, her light fell at different angles, and the aspect of the woods was continually chang-

ing. New and grander groups of trees came into view, and mighty oaks and chestnuts seemed to stalk forward, with majestic slowness, from the surrounding obscurity, and, after a time, to give place to a succession of others, by retiring amidst the darkness from which they had at first emerged. Tremors of awe began to pervade my frame, and I almost expected that the tones of some superhuman voice would break the appalling silence that prevailed in the wilderness around me.

My mind, by degrees, became so calm that I dropped into a half-slumber, during which I had a distinct perception where I was, but totally forgot the circumstances connected with my situation. A slight noise at length startled me, and I awaked full of terror, but could not conceive why I should feel such alarm, until recollection made the form of Thakakawerenté flash upon my mind. I saw a number of indistinct forms moving backwards and forwards a little way from me, and heard something beating gently upon the ground. A small cloud floated before the moon, and I waited with breathless impatience till it passed away, and allowed her full radiance to reach the earth. I then discovered that five deer had come to drink at the rivulet, and that the noise of them striking their fore-feet against its banks had aroused me. They stood gazing at me with an aspect so meek and beautiful that they almost seemed to incorporate with the moonlight,

but, after a little time, they started away, and disappeared among the mazes of the forest.

When I surveyed the heavens, I perceived, by the alteration which had taken place in their appearance, that I had slept a considerable time. The moon had begun to descend towards the horizon; a new succession of stars glittered upon the sky; the respective positions of the different constellations were changed; and one of the planets which had been conspicuous from its dazzling lustre a few hours before, had set, and was no longer distinguishable. It was overpowering to think that all these changes had been effected without noise, tumult, or confusion, and that worlds performed their revolutions, and travelled through the boundlessness of space, with a silence too profound to awaken an echo in the noiseless depths of the forest, or disturb the slumbers of a feeble human being.

I waited impatiently for the appearance of Outalisso, who had not informed me at what hour I might expect to see him. The stars now twinkled feebly amidst the faint glow of dawn that began to light the eastern horizon, and the setting moon appeared behind some pines, and threw a rich yellow radiance upon their dark-green boughs. Gentle rustlings among the trees, and low chirpings, announced that the birds began to feel the influence of approaching day; and I sometimes observed a solitary wolf stealing cautiously along in the distance. While

engaged in contemplating the scene, I suddenly thought I saw an Indian a little way off. I could not ascertain whether or not it was Outalisso, but, fearing it might be Thakakawerenté, whom I dreaded to encounter in my unarmed state, I retired from the roots of the tree, and concealed myself among some brushwood.

I remained there for some time, but did not perceive any one near me; and thinking that I had been deceived by fancy, I resolved to return to my former station, and accordingly set out towards the great tree, but shortly became alarmed at neither reaching it nor seeing it so soon as I expected. I turned back in much agitation, and endeavoured to retrace my steps to the brushwood, but all in vain. I examined the most remarkable trees around me, without being able to recollect of having seen one of them before. I perceived that I had lost myself. The moment I became aware of this, my faculties and perceptions seemed to desert me one after another, and at last I was conscious of being in existence only by the feeling of chaotic and insupportable hopelessness which remained; but after a little time, all my intellectual powers returned with increased vigour and acuteness, and appeared to vie with each other in giving me a vivid sense of the horrors of my situation. My soul seemed incapable of affording play to the tumultuous crowd of feelings that struggled to manifest themselves.

I hurried wildly from one place to another, calling on Outalisso and Thakakawerenté by turns. The horrible silence that prevailed was more distracting than a thousand deafening noises would have been. I staggered about in a state of dizzy perturbation. My ears began to ring with unearthly sounds, and every object became distorted and terrific. The trees seemed to start from their places, and rush past each other, intermingling their branches with furious violence and horrible crashings, while the moon careered along the sky, and the stars hurried backwards and forwards with eddying and impetuous motions.

I tried in vain for a long time to compose myself, and to bring my feelings under due subordination. The remembrance of the past was obliterated and renewed by fits and starts; but at best, my recollection of anything that had occurred to me previous to the breaking-up of the ice upon the lake, was shadowy, dim, and unsatisfactory, and I felt as if the former part of my life had been spent in another world. I lay down among the withered leaves, and covered my face with my hands, that I might avoid the mental distraction occasioned by the sight of external objects. I began to reflect that I could not possibly have as yet wandered far from the great tree, and that if I called upon Outalisso at intervals, he might perhaps hear me and

come to my relief. Consoled by the idea, I gradually became quiet and resigned.

I soon began to make the woods resound with the name of Outalisso; but in the course of the day a tempest of wind arose, and raged with so much noise that I could hardly hear my own voice. A dense mist filled the air, and involved everything in such obscurity that the sphere of my vision did not extend beyond five or six yards. The fog was in continual agitation, rolling along in volumes, ascending and descending, bursting open and closing again, and assuming strange and transitory forms. Every time the blast received an accession of force, I heard a confused roaring and crashing at a distance, which gradually increased in strength and distinctness, till it reached that part of the forest that stretched around me. Then the trees began to creak and groan incessantly, their boughs were shattered against each other, fibres of wood whirled through the air in every direction, and showers of withered leaves, caught up and swept along by the wind, met and mingled with them, and rendered the confusion still more distracting. I stood still in one spot, looking fearfully from side to side, in the prospect of being crushed to death by some immense mass of falling timber, for the trees around me, when viewed through the distorting medium of the fog, often appeared to have lost their per-

pendicularity, and to be bending towards the earth, although they only waved in the wind. At last I crept under the trunk of an oak that lay along the ground, resolving to remain there until the tempest should abate.

A short time before sunset the wind had ceased, the mists were dissipated, and a portion of the blue sky appeared directly above me. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, I ventured from my place of refuge, and began to think of making another attempt to regain the great tree, when I heard the report of a rifle. I was so petrified with joy and surprise that I had no power to call out till the firing was repeated. I then shouted "Outalisso!" several times, and soon saw him advancing towards me.

"Why are you not at the place I appointed?" cried he; "I feared you had lost yourself, and discharged my gun as a signal. But all danger is past. Thakakawerenté is dead—I killed him." There was some blood on Outalisso's dress, but he looked so calm and careless that I hesitated to believe what he told me.

"I do not deceive you," said he, "and I will tell you how Thakakawerenté came by his death. He awaked soon after midnight, and not finding you in the camp, suspected that I had told you that he intended to kill you. He taxed me with having

done so, and I scorned to deny it. His anger made him forget the truth, and he said I had betrayed my trust, and at the same time struck me on the face. Now, you know, an Indian never forgives a blow, or an accusation such as he uttered. I buried my tomahawk in his head. His friends lay asleep in the wigwam, and I dragged away his body to some distance, and covered it with leaves, and then concealed myself till I saw them set out on their journey, which they soon did, doubtless supposing that Thakakawerenté and I had gone on before. I have been at the great tree since morning, but the mist and the tempest prevented me from seeking you till now. Be satisfied, you shall see the corpse of Thakakawerenté. Follow me!"

Outalisso now began to proceed rapidly through the forest, and I walked behind him without uttering a word. We soon reached the spot where the Indians had slept the preceding night, and found the wigwam remaining, and likewise several embers of fire. My companion immediately fanned them into a state of brightness, and then collected some pieces of dry wood that lay around, and piled them upon the charcoal. The whole soon burst into a blaze, and we both sat down within its influence, Outalisso at the same time presenting me with a quantity of pemican, which proved

very acceptable, as I had eaten nothing for more than twenty hours.

After we had reposed ourselves a little, Outalisso rose up and motioned that I should accompany him. He conducted me to a small pile of brushwood and dry leaves, part of which he immediately removed, and I saw the corpse of Thakakawerenté stretched beneath. I shrank back, shuddering with horror, but he pulled me forwards, and said I must assist him in conveying the body to the fire. Seeing me still unwilling, he took it up in his arms, and, hurrying away, deposited it in the wigwam. I followed him, and asked what he meant by doing so. "Are you ignorant of our customs?" said he. "When an Indian dies, all his property must be buried with him. He who takes anything that belonged to a dead person, will receive a curse from the Great Spirit in addition. After I had killed Thakakawerenté, I took up his tomahawk by mistake, and carried it away with me. I must now restore it, and also cover him with earth lest his bones should whiten in the sun."

Outalisso now proceeded to arrange the dress of the dead man, and likewise stuck the tomahawk in his girdle. He next went a little way into the forest for the purpose of collecting some bark to put in the bottom of the grave, and I was left alone.

The night was dark, dim, and dreary, and the fire blazed feebly and irregularly. A superstitious awe stole over me, and I dared hardly look around, though I sometimes cast an almost involuntary glance at the corpse, which had a wild and fearful appearance. Thakakawerenté lay upon his back, and his long, lank, black hair was spread confusedly upon his breast and neck. His half-open eyes still retained a glassy lustre, and his teeth were firmly set against each other. Large dashes of blood stained his vest, and his clenched hands and contracted limbs showed what struggles had preceded death. When the flickering light of the fire happened to fall upon him, I almost fancied that he began to move, and would have started away had not a depressing dread chained me to the spot; but the sound of Outalisso's axe in some degree dissipated the fears that chilled my heart, and I spent the time in listening to the regular recurrence of its strokes, until he came back with an armful of bark.

I assisted him in burying Thakakawerenté under the shade of a tall walnut-tree; and when we had accomplished this, we returned to the fire, and waited till moonlight would enable us to pursue our journey. Outalisso had willingly agreed to conduct me home, for he wished to change his abode for a season, lest Thakakawerenté's relations

should discover his guilt, and execute vengeance upon him.

We set out about an hour after midnight, and travelled through the woods till dawn, when we came in sight of the river, on the banks of which I had first fallen in with the Indians. In the course of the day Outalisso procured a canoe, and we paddled up the stream, and next morning reached the trading-post on the side of the lake.

HARRY BOLTON'S CURACY.

[*MAGA.* FEBRUARY 1851.]

ONE of the greatest enjoyments which are likely to fall to the lot of a man in middle life, is to spend a week or so with the old school-and-college companion whom he has not seen since the graver page of life has been turned over for both parties. It is as unlike any ordinary visit-making as possible. It is one of the very few instances in which the complimentary dialogue between the guest and his entertainer comes to have a real force and meaning. One has to unlearn, for this special occasion, the art so necessary in ordinary society, of interpreting terms by their contraries. And in fact it is difficult, at first, for one who has been used for some years to a social atmosphere whose warmth is mainly artificial, to breathe freely in the natural sunshine of an old friend's company; just as a native Londoner is said sometimes to pine away, when removed into the fresh air of the country. We are so used to consider the shake of the hand, and the "Very glad to see you," of the hundred

and one people who ask us to dinner, as merely a polite and poetical form of expressing, "You certainly are a bore; but as you are here, I must make the best of you"—that it costs us an effort to comprehend that "How are you, old fellow?" does, in the present case, imply a *bonâ fide* hope that we are as sound in health and heart, if not as young, as formerly. And especially when a man's pursuits have led him a good deal into the world, and many of his warmer feelings have been, insensibly perhaps, chilled by the contact, the heartiness of his reception by some old college friend who has led a simple life, the squire of his paternal acres, or the occupant of a country parsonage, and has gained and lost less by the polishing process of society, will come upon him with a strangeness almost reproachful. But once fairly fixed within the hospitable walls, the natural tone is recognised, and proves contagious; the formal encrustations of years melt in the first hour of after-dinner chat, and the heart is opened to feelings and language which it had persuaded itself were long forgotten. And when the end of your three weeks' holiday arrives at last, which you cannot persuade yourself has been more than three days (though you seem to have lived over again the best half of your life in the time), you have so far forgotten the conventional rules of good-breeding, that when your friend says to you on the last evening, "Must you really

go? Can't you stay till Monday?" you actually take him at his word, and begin to cast about in your mind for some possible excuse for stealing another couple of days or so, though you have heard the same expression from the master of every house where you have happened to visit, and never dreamt of understanding it in any other than its civilised (*i. e.*, *non-natural*) sense—as a hint to fix a day for going, and stick to it, that your entertainer may "know the worst."

I was heartily glad, therefore, when at last I found that there was nothing to prevent me from paying a visit (long promised, and long looked forward to, but against which, I began to think, gods and men had conspired) to my old and true friend Lumley. I dare say he has a Christian name; indeed, I have no reason to doubt it, and, on the strength of an initial not very decipherable, prefixed to the L in his signature, I have never hesitated to address him, "J. Lumley, Esq.;" but I know him as Long Lumley, and so does every man who, like myself, remembers him at Oxford; and as Long Lumley do all his cotemporaries know him best, and esteem him accordingly; and he must excuse me if I immortalise him to the public, in spite of godfathers and godmothers, by that more familiar appellation. A cousin was with him at college, a miserable sneaking fellow, who was known as "Little Lumley;" and if, as I suspect,

they were both Johns or Jameses, it is quite desirable to distinguish them unmistakably; for though the other *has* the best shooting in the country, I would not be suspected of spending even the first week of September inside such a fellow's gates.

But Long Lumley was and is of a very different stamp; six feet three, and every inch a gentleman. I wish he was not, of late years, quite so fond of farming: a man who can shoot, ride, and translate an ode of Horace as he can, ought to have a soul above turnips. It is almost the only point on which we are diametrically opposed in tastes and habits. We nearly fell out about it the very first morning after my arrival.

Breakfast was over — a somewhat late one in honour of the supposed fatigues of yesterday's journey, and it became necessary to arrange proceedings for the day. What a false politeness it is, which makes a host responsible for his guests' amusement! and how often, in consequence, are they compelled to do, with grimaces of forced satisfaction, the very thing they would not! However, Lumley and myself were too old friends to have any scruples of delicacy on that point. I had been eyeing him for some minutes while he was fastening on a pair of formidable high-lows, and was not taken by surprise when the proposal came out, "Now, old fellow, will you come and have a look at my farm?"

"Can't I see it from the window?"

"Stuff! come, I must show you my sheep: I assure you they are considered about the best in this neighbourhood."

"Well, then, I'll taste the mutton any day you like, and give you my honest opinion."

"Don't be an ass now, but get your hat and come along; it's going to be a lovely day; and we'll just take a turn over the farm—there's a new thrashing-machine I want to show you, too, and then back here to lunch."

"Seriously, then, Lumley, I wont do anything of the kind. I do you the justice to believe, that you asked me here to enjoy myself; and that I am quite ready to do in any fairly rational manner; and I flatter myself I am in nowise particular; but as to going bogging myself among turnips, or staring into the faces and poking the ribs of shorthorns and south-downs—why, as an old friend, you'll excuse me."

"Hem! there's no accounting for tastes," said Lumley, in a half-disappointed tone.

"No," said I, "there certainly is not."

"Well, then," said he—he never lost his good-humour—"what shall we do? I'll tell you—you remember Harry Bolton? rather your junior, but you must have known him well, because he was quite in our set from the first—to be sure, didn't you spill him out of a tandem at Abingdon corner? Well, he is living now about nine miles from here,

and we'll drive over and see him. I meant to write to ask him to dine here, and this will save the trouble."

"With all my heart," said I; "I never saw him since I left Oxford. I fancied I heard of his getting into some mess—involved in some way, was he not?"

"Not involved exactly; but he certainly did make himself scarce from a very nice house and curacy which he had when he first left Oxford, and buried himself alive for I don't know how long, and all for the very queerest reason, or rather without any reason at all. Did you never hear of it?"

"No; only some vague rumour, as I said just now."

"You never heard, then, how he came into this neighbourhood? Have the dog-cart round in ten minutes, Sam, and we dine at seven. Now, get yourself in marching order, and I'll tell you the whole story as we go along."

He did so, but it was so interrupted by continual expostulations with his horse, and remarks upon the country through which we were driving, that it will be at least as intelligible if I tell it in my own words; especially as I had many of the most graphic passages from Bolton's own lips afterwards.

It was before he left Oxford, I think, that Bolton lost his father, and was thrown pretty much upon his own resources. A physician with a large family,

however good his practice, seldom leaves much behind him; and poor Harry found himself, after spending a handsome allowance and something more, left to begin life on his own account, with a degree, a good many bills, and a few hundreds, quite insufficient to pay them. However, he was not the sort of man to look upon the dark side of things; and no heir, long expectant, and just stepping into his thousands per annum, carried away from the university a lighter heart and a merrier face than Harry Bolton. He got ordained in due course; and though not exactly the material out of which one would prefer to cut a country curate, still he threw off, with his sporting coats and many-coloured waistcoats, most of the habits thereto belonging, and less suited to his profession. To live upon a curate's stipend he found more difficult; and being a fair scholar, and having plenty of friends and connections, he announced his intention of "driving," as he called it, a pair of pupils, whom he might train up in so much Latin and Greek, and other elements of general knowledge (including, perhaps, a little shooting and gig-driving), as they might require for their matriculations. The desired youths were soon found; and Harry entered upon this new employment with considerable ardour, and a very honest intention of doing his best. How the Latin and Greek prospered is a point in some degree obscure to present historians; but all the pupils were unan-

imous in declaring the wine to be unexceptionable, and their preceptor's dogs and shooting first-rate; in fact, he sustained, with them as with the public generally, the reputation of being one of the heartiest and best fellows in the world. From the poorest among his parishioners, to whom he was charitable above his means, but who felt almost more than his gifts the manner of his giving, to the squire ten miles off, who met his pleasant face and smile once a-year at a dinner party, all spoke well of Harry Bolton. No wonder that his pupils looked upon him as the very paragon of tutors, and found their path of learning strewed with unexpected flowers. How many scholars he made is still unknown; but he made many friends: with the uncalculating gratitude of youth, all remembered the pleasant companion when they might have forgotten the hard-working instructor: and frequent were the tokens of such remembrance, varying with the tastes of the senders, which reached the little parsonage by the Oxford coach, from those who sucessively assumed the *toga virilis*, and became (university) *men*. Collars of brawn and cases of claret were indeed but perishable memorials; but there came also whips extravagantly mounted, and tomes of orthodox divinity in the soberest bindings, all bearing inscriptions more or less classical, from his "*quondam alumni*." The first-named delicacies were duly passed on, with Harry's compliments, to

grace more fittingly the tables of some of his hospitable entertainers; and, in an equally unselfish spirit, he seldom sat down alone to any of his literary dainties, but kept them in honourable state on his most conspicuous book-shelf, for the use and behoof of any friend who might wish to enjoy them.

But here I am anticipating. For some time the pupilising went on pretty smoothly. Two or three couple of youths were fairly launched upon the university, and nothing particularly untoward had occurred to ruffle the curate's good-humour or injure his reputation. There had been no attempt at elopement with the cook or housemaid (Bolton's precaution had secured ugly ones); no poaching on Sir Thomas's favourite preserve, though close at hand, and sportsmen of eighteen are not over nice in their distinctions: a tall Irishman had been with him, summer vacations and all, for nearly two years, and had *not* made love to either of the squire's undeniably pretty daughters. In short, the pupils were less of a bore than Harry had supposed it possible, and, in some cases, very agreeable companions to enliven the occasional dulness of a country parish.

But somehow or other, in one chief point which he had aimed at, he found himself disappointed. In counting so many additional hundreds to his scanty income, Harry Bolton had fancied he was going to make himself a rich man. He was not avaricious,

or even selfish—far from it; but he wanted to be independent; there were visions, perhaps, flitting indistinctly before him, of a time when he might tire of a solitary home, and resign into some fair and gentle hand the reins of the liberty he was so fond of boasting as a bachelor. He did not grudge his time or labour; he had cast off much of his old habit of idleness, and took a real interest in his pupils; still he had expected some of the results to himself would take the tangible shape of pounds shillings and pence. But though the cheques came duly in at Midsummer and Christmas, the balance at his banker's increased but very slowly; in short, he found that the additional expenses, necessary and unnecessary, entailed upon him by the change in his establishment, nearly counterbalanced the additional income. Not to speak of such ordinary matters as butchers' and bakers' and wine-merchants' bills—for his table was always most liberal, now that he had to entertain others, as it had been simple and economical while alone—indeed the hospitality of the neighbourhood had then made his housekeeping almost a sinecure; but, independently of this, Harry had been led to extend his expenses —he said unavoidably—in other directions. A rough pony had hitherto contented him to gallop into the neighbouring town for letters, and to carry him and his valise to the dinner-parties even of his most aristocratic entertainers. But now, inasmuch as

sometimes an hospitable invitation extended itself to "the young men," he had felt in duty bound, for his and their joint accommodation, to replace the pony by a showy-looking mare, and to invest the legal sum of nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence in the purchase of a dog-cart. As an almost necessary consequence, the boy "Jim" gave way to a grown-up groom, who did rather less work for considerably more wages, hissing and whistling over the said mare and dog-cart in the most knowing manner, and condescending, though with some scruples of conscience, to clean boots and knives. Harry's reminiscences of his more sporting days were yet fresh enough for him to make a point of seeing his turn-out "look as it ought to do." Jim and the pony, and all their accoutrements, were rough, and useful, and cheap, and made no pretensions to be otherwise. Now, things were changed, and saddlery and harness of the best (there was no economy, as Harry observed, in buying a poor article) found their place among the bills at Christmas. In short, he was led into a maze of new wants, individually trifling, but collectively sufficient to tell upon his yearly expenditure; and he was beginning gravely to attempt to solve that universal problem—the asses' bridge, which the wisest domestic economists stick fast at year after year—"where the deuce all the money goes to?"—when circumstances occurred which put all such

useless inquiries out of his head, and indeed put his debtor and creditor transactions on a much more primitive footing.

In the final settlement of the accounts of one of his pupils, who was leaving him for the university, some misunderstanding arose between himself and the father. The sum in question was but a few pounds; but the objection was put forward in a manner which Bolton considered as reflecting upon his own straightforward and liberal dealing; and it so happened that the young man had, from circumstances, been indebted in an unusual degree to his kindness. He therefore, I have no doubt, took the matter up warmly; for those who remember him as I do, can well imagine how his blood would boil at anything he considered mean or unhandsome. It ended in his insisting on the whole amount—a hundred or so—respecting which the difference had arisen, being paid in to the treasurer of the county hospital instead of to himself; and he vowed silently, but determinedly, to renounce pupilising thenceforth for ever. In vain did some of his best friends persuade him to change his resolution; he kept two who were with him at the time for a few months, when they also were to enter college; but he steadily refused any other offers: he sold off at once all his superfluous luxuries, and, as soon as practicable, gave up his curacy, and quitted the neighbourhood, to the general regret of

all who knew him, and to the astonishment of all but the very few who were in the secret.

When Bolton's friends next heard of him, he was living in a remote district of H——shire, on an income necessarily very small; for it could have been scarcely more than the proceeds of his curacy; and curacies in that part of the country were then but a wretched provision for any man—especially for one accustomed as he had been to good living and good society. However, he was not much troubled with the latter in his present position; not to speak of the fact that his nearest conversible neighbour lived seven miles off. Wherever parsons are mostly poor, and many of them ill-educated, they are not thought much of, either by farmers or gentlemen. And as it did not suit Harry's tastes to enjoy his pipe and pot in the society of the first, as his predecessor had done with much contentment, nor yet to wait for the arrival of the one landed proprietor in the parish before he commenced the morning service, he was voted by the overseers and churchwardens to be "mighty set up," and by the squire to be "a d—d unmannerly fellow." Both, indeed, soon found out that they were wrong; and the farmers had the grace to confess it, and came, in course of time, to believe it possible for a curate to be a gentleman without being proud, and that it was at least as well for him to be visiting the sick and poor, and overlooking the parish school,

and able to give a little good advice to themselves in matters of difficulty, as to be boosing in their company at the Crown and Thistle. And, in course of time, those rough but honest people came to respect him almost as much perhaps, in their way, as his more enlightened neighbours had done in his former position. It must have been a great change, however, to a man like Bolton, used to good society, fond of it, and readily welcomed in it, as he had always been. No doubt he felt it; yet he declared that, after the first few weeks, he never was happier in his life. His gun was given up, as an indulgence too expensive, but there was excellent trout-fishing for miles on both sides of his cottage; and, though a sport to which he had no great liking in his earlier days, he now took to it vigorously as the only amusement at hand, and became no unworthy disciple of honest Isaac. The worst effect of this new life of isolation was, that he became somewhat negligent in his habits; took to smoking a great deal, and made his tobacconist's account a good deal longer than his tailor's. He had still many old friends and connections at a distance, with whom he might have spent half the year if he had pleased; but, in his first pique with the world in general, he had fixed himself purposely as far out of their reach as possible; travelling was expensive (railways as yet were not); assistance in his clerical duties was not easily obtained; and so,

partly from choice, and partly from necessity, his new life became one of almost utter isolation.

Of course there were occasions when he found it necessary to visit the neighbouring market-town—if it could be called neighbouring when it was twelve miles off. The main road lay about a mile from Harry's little cottage, and a coach, passing daily, would usually deposit him safely in the High Street in the course of the forenoon—allowing an hour for waiting for it at the crossing (it was always after its time), and about two more, if the roads were not unusually heavy, for getting over the distance. It was not a very luxurious style of travelling; and Harry often preferred to walk in one day, and return the next. It was on one of these rare visits that a soaking rain discouraged him from setting out for home on foot, and give the Regulator the unusually full complement of one inside and one outside passenger. On the box was our friend Harry, inside a rather precise-looking personage, whose costume, as far as a large cloak allowed it to be seen, looked somewhat more clerical than the Curate's, the latter being clad in a smart upper benjamin of the landlord's of the Swan, finished round the throat with a very gay shawl of his daughter's, both forced upon him in consideration of the weather; for Harry, though by no means a frequent, was a highly favoured guest, and they would sooner have kept him in No. 1 for a week

gratis, than have allowed him to turn out in the rain without due protection.

Slower than usual that day was the Regulator's progress through the mud and against the wind, and briefer than usual its driver's replies to Harry's good-humoured attempts at conversation.

"Whom have we inside, do you know, Haines?"

"Well, I reckon it's what you'd call a hopposition coach like," grunted out Joe Haines.

"Eh? I don't exactly understand."

"Why, I mean a Methodist bishop, or summat o' that sort. You see there was a great opening of the Independent College here o' Tuesday, and there was a lot o' them gentry about the town, looking too good to live. I druv' five on 'em down yesterday, and they gev' me a shilling and a fourpenny amongst the whole lot. Oh! I loves them sort, don't I just?" and Joe gave his near wheeler a cut, illustrative of his affection. It was a longer speech than he had made all the way, and he relapsed into a gloomy silence.

The wind was driving right into their teeth, and the evening closing fast, and they were passing the last milestone to the turning without any farther attempt at conversation, when there came first an ominous crack from under their feet, then a jolt, an unsteady wavering motion for a few seconds, when, with scarcely time for an exclamation, the coach toppled over on one side, and Bolton found himself

reclining on the portly person of Mr Joseph Haines, who, in his turn, was saved from contusions by a friendly heap of mud by the roadside. Beyond a broken axle, however, no damage was done. The horses were glad of any opportunity to stand still. Bolton got up, shook himself, and laughed. Joe Haines was proceeding to philosophise rather strongly on the accident, not exactly after the manner of Job or Seneca, when the inside passenger, putting his head out of the only practicable window, begged him to spare his oaths, and help him out of his prison.

The stranger was soon extricated, and the horses taken out; and the driver, requesting his passengers to await his return, set off to seek assistance at the nearest cottage. As to the coach itself proceeding farther until partially repaired, that was evidently out of the question; and so Harry observed to his companion, who did not appear very knowing in such matters.

"And how far may we be from S——, sir?" inquired he, upon receiving this not very agreeable intelligence.

"Fifteen miles at least," replied Bolton.

"Indeed! so far, and is there no place near where I could procure a conveyance of any kind? I have an engagement there I particularly wished to keep to-morrow."

"Really, I fear not; this is quite an out-of-the-

way place: the driver can tell you better than I can, but I know the neighbourhood pretty well, and think you would have to send back to the Swan at B—— for horses."

"It is very unfortunate, and it is past nine already; what is the nearest place, sir, where I could get decent accommodation for the night?"

"Why, the nearest place," said Harry, hesitatingly, "is the 'Crown and Thistle,' about three miles off, but I can't say much for the accommodation. Wo-ho,"—one of the horses, tired at last of standing in the drizzling rain, was showing symptoms of an immediate return to his stable. The stranger merely gave vent to a dissatisfied "Humph!" and they stood silently awaiting the approach of a light along the road, which betokened Joe's return with assistance. The coach was soon righted, and set up against the side of a bank; and Mr Haines, having given charge to one of his aids-extraordinary to keep watch by it till dawn with a light, both to prevent accidents and abstraction of the luggage, announced his intention of returning with the horses to B——, offering to his inside passenger the choice of a ride back, or taking a nap in the coach till morning. "*You* won't be long getting home, Mr Bolton, anyhow,"—and the pronoun was emphasised, to show that even this sympathy was little extended to his fellow-traveller.

"No, Joe, I must say you have been pretty con-

siderate: as you *were* to break down, you could hardly have arranged it more handily for me. Just look me out my little carpet-bag, and I suppose you'll expect an extra shilling for your performance to-night, eh?"

Joe gave a hoarse laugh, and proceeded to rummage the boot; and Harry took advantage of the opportunity to whisper a few inquiries about his fellow-passenger.

"Well, I be pretty sure, sir, it's a Dr Bates, as preached at the opening on Tuesday. There was two or three black-coats came with him to the yard afore we started; he's quite a top-sawyer among 'em, and can hold on for two hours good, best pace, they tell me. He's giv' out to preach over at S—— to-morrow morning. I see'd the printed bills stuck all over town to-day."

To-morrow was Sunday; and Bolton thought of a certain manuscript, not quite finished, lying on his desk at home. He glanced again at the stranger, and possibly, in the orthodoxy of his heart, did not feel particularly grieved at the disappointment probably in store for the itching ears of the S—— non-conformists.

"Well, good-night, Haines," said he. But seeing his late companion still standing in the road, looking rather helpless, and hesitating to leave him altogether to the tender mercies of the coachman, "I am walking in the direction of the village inn,"

he continued, "and if I can show you the way, I shall be very glad to do so. I dare say I can also find some one to fetch your luggage."

"Thank you, sir," said the other. "I cannot do better than follow your example;" and he at once selected and shouldered, with some activity for a man obviously on the wrong side of forty, a carpet-bag of more cumbersome dimensions than Bolton's; and they strode down the road together, nearly in darkness, and with the rain still falling.

They had nearly reached the curate's humble cottage, without much further conversation, when the stranger repeated his inquiries as to the distance to the inn, and the probability of his obtaining there any tolerable accommodation. "A *clean* bed," he said, "would content him; was he likely to find one?"

A struggle had been going on, from the time they left the coach, between Harry Bolton's good-nature, and what he thought his due dignity. Every word his fellow-passenger had uttered had convinced him, more and more, that he was a man of education and good sense, to say the least; a totally different being from the class of whom Jabez Green, who expounded at Mount Pisgah in his own parish on Sundays, and did a little shoemaking and poaching on week-days, formed a specimen ever before his eyes; and if it had not seemed a ludicrous misapplication of hospitality to have enter-

tained the great gun of schism within the lares of the "*persona ecclesia*," he would long ago have offered the very respectable and mild-mannered gentleman, dropped by an unlucky accident almost at his door, at least a good fire and a pair of clean sheets for the night. Sleep at the Crown and Thistle!—why, on consideration, it was scarcely creditable to himself to send him there. The landlord was one of the most disreputable fellows in the parish, and, by ten o'clock on a Saturday night, was usually so drunk as to be more likely to refuse a guest any accommodation at all, than to take any extra pains for him. And the dirt, and the noise, and the etceteras! No, Dr Bates had better have stuck to the inside of the coach than have tried the Crown and Thistle. But where else was he to go? There was a good spare bedroom, no doubt, at Barby farm, within half a mile; but it had not been occupied since Harry had slept in it himself on his first arrival in the parish, and then it took a week's notice to move the piles of wool and cheese, and have it duly aired. The stranger coughed. Harry grew desperate, and spoke out.

"We are close to my little place now, sir. I think I can offer you what you will hardly find at the inn—a clean room and a well-aired bed; and it seems a mere act of common civility to beg you to accept it."

With many thanks, but with the natural polite-

ness and ease with which a gentleman receives from another the courtesy which he is always ready to offer himself, the hospitable invitation was at once freely accepted: and in five minutes they had passed the little gate, and were awaiting the opening of the door.

This service was performed by the whole available force of Harry's establishment. One active little elderly woman, who was there on resident and permanent duty, in all capacities, assisted on this occasion by Samuel Shears, parish clerk, sexton, barber, bird-fancier, fishing-tackle maker, &c. &c. &c.; and acting gardener, valet, butler, and footman, when required, to the reverend the curate. Loud was the welcome he received from both. "Had he walked through all the rain, sure*ly!* The coach was very late then; they'd 'most given him up: no, Sam hadn't, 'cause of service to-morrow;" when their volubility was somewhat checked by the sight of his companion; and the old lady's face underwent no very favourable change when informed she must prepare a second bed.

"Walk in, pray, and warm yourself—that room —Sam, take these bags;" and Harry stepped aside into the kitchen, to negotiate with his housekeeper for the stranger's accommodation; a matter not to be effected but by some little tact; for Molly, like servants of higher pretensions, did not like being put out of her way, by people "coming tramping

in," as she said, at all hours of the night; and if Bolton had replied to her close inquiries, as to who and whence the new guest was, with the statement that he was a stray Methodist preacher, it is probable that Molly, who had lived with clergymen since she was a child, and would sooner have missed her dinner than "her church," would have resigned her keys of office at once in high disgust.

"The gentleman will sleep in my room, of course, Molly, and I shall have my things put into the other;—anything will do for supper—bread and cheese, Molly, quite well—toast a little, will you? Poor man, he seems to have a cough."

"Toasted cheese an't good for a cough."

"No; to be sure not. Well, you can fry a little bacon, and a few eggs, you know."

"There an't no eggs. I don't know what's come to the 'ens: they behaves 'orrid, they does."

"Well, anything, anything, Molly. I'm very tired, and I don't care what it is: we shall both be very glad to get to bed."

"Lor, I dare say you be tired, sir," said Molly, somewhat pacified. "You've had a very wet ride, to be sure; lawk-a-me, why this coat might be a-wringed out." And she hastened to relieve her master of some of his outer wrappings, and supply him with a warm dressing-gown and slippers, in which he soon joined his guest in the little parlour; and having introduced him to the room he was to

occupy for the night, left him also to make himself comfortable.

If Harry Bolton did not repent of his hospitality, which would have been very unlike him, yet, upon consideration, he certainly felt he was acting the good Samaritan somewhat more literally than he had ever expected to do.

"What on earth shall I do with him to-morrow, I should like to know?" was the first question that suggested itself—much more readily than did the answer. He could not be expected to go to church, perhaps; but would he stay quietly at home? or walk off to assist the very reverend Jabez at Mount Pisgah? As to his keeping his appointment at S——, that, at least, was out of the question; and, after all, there seemed so much good sense and feeling of propriety about the traveller, that it was most probable—at least Harry thought so—that he would not in any way offend against the rules of the household which he had entered under such circumstances.

So the curate brushed the clinging rain from his hair, and the cloud from his brow, with one and the same motion, and relapsed into his usual state of good-humour. Supper came in, and he and his guest sat down opposite to each other, and prepared to discuss old Molly's simple cookery. Really, now that one could look at him well, the man was very presentable in person as well as in manner.

Harry said grace in a very few words, and the other's "Amen" was audible and unexceptionable; reverent, and not nasal. He had a capital appetite: it was said to be characteristic of his calling, but in that point Harry fully kept pace with him; and the conversation was not, for the present, a very lively one. Sam came in at last to take away.

"Sam," said the curate, in a half-aside, "*is* there a bottle of port?—here's the key."

"La! sir, you bid me take it down to old Nan, you know; and it wor the last bottle, I tell'd you then."

"Ha! so I did, so I did. Did she like it, Sam?"

"Like it?" said Sam, opening his eyes, "I warrant her!"

"Well, Sam, I hope it did her good;—never mind. You must fare as I do, I am afraid," said he to the other. "Bring out the whisky-jar, Sam."

Bolton mixed himself a glass without further preface or apology; and his neighbour, with the remark that it could not be much amiss after a wetting, very moderately followed his example.

"And now," said Bolton, rummaging in a little cupboard behind him, "I hope you don't dislike the smell of tobacco. I'm rather too fond of it myself. My weakness is a pipe: I could find you a cigar, perhaps, if you are ever—"

"Thank you, I never do smoke; but pray do not mind me: I was at a German university for a year

and a half, and that is a pretty fair apprenticeship to cloud-raising."

Took a doctor's degree there, no doubt, thought Harry; but it served excellently as an opening for general conversation; and two pipes had been consumed, and Molly had twice informed the gentlemen that the beds were all ready, and that Sam was waiting to know if there were any orders for to-morrow, before Harry remembered that he had a sermon still to finish, and that it was verging upon Sunday morning—so intelligent and agreeable had been the discourse of the stranger.

"If you please, sir," said the clerk, putting his head in at the door," "the rain is a-coming down like nothing, and that great hole over the pulpit ben't mended yet. Master Brooks promised me it should be done afore to-night; but he's never seen to it."

"That Brooks is the very—but, there, it can't be helped to-night, Sam, at all events," said Bolton, rather ashamed that the defects of his parochial administration should be exposed, as it were, to the enemy. "I must speak to him about it myself."

"I clapped a couple of sods over it as well as I could, sir," said the persevering Sam; and I don't think much wet can come in to hurt, like. Will this gentleman 'ficiate to-morrow?" (this was in a loud confidential whisper) "'cause the t'other surplice a'n't—"

"Don't bother now—there's a good fellow," said Harry, considerably annoyed, as he shut the door in the face of his astonished subordinate, who was generally privileged to gossip as much as he pleased. He covered his embarrassment by showing his visitor at once to his room, and then sat down to complete his own preparations for the next day's duties.

The rain was as busily falling in the morning as if it had only just begun, instead of having been at it all night. Harry had been more than usually scrupulous in his dress; but when they met at the breakfast-table, his guest's clerical *tout ensemble* beat him hollow. After a rather silent meal, in which both, as if by tacit consent, avoided all allusion to subjects connected with the day and its duties, Bolton mustered his courage, as they rose from table, to say—"My service is at eleven, and I shall have rather a wet walk; you, perhaps, are not disposed to accompany me?"

"By all means," said the stranger, bowing; "I am quite ready;—is it time to set out?" And in a few minutes they were picking their way, side by side, down the little miry lane.

The church, it must be confessed, was not a comely edifice. Its architectural pretensions must originally have been of the humblest order; and now, damp and dilapidated, it was one of the many which, in those days, were a disgrace to any Christian community. There was the hole in the roof,

immediately over the curate's head, imperfectly stopped by Sam's extempore repairs; and very wretched and comfortless did the few who composed the congregation look, as they came dripping in, and dispersed themselves among the crumbling pews. The service proceeded, and none showed such reverent attention as the stranger; and being placed in the rectorial pew, immediately opposite the clerk, the distinct though subdued tone of his responses was so audible, and so disturbed that functionary (who had that part of the service usually pretty much to himself, and had come to consider it as in some sort his exclusive privilege), that he made some terrible blunders in the hard verses in the Psalms, and occasionally looked round upon his rival, on these latter occasions especially, with unmistakable indignation.

The service concluded, Bolton found his guest awaiting him in the porch; and some ten minutes' sharp walking, with few remarks, except in admiration of the pertinacity of the rain, brought them home again to the cottage. A plain early dinner was discussed: there was no afternoon service; and the curate had just stepped into his kitchen to listen to some petition from a parishioner, when the stranger took the opportunity of retiring to his own apartment, and did not reappear until summoned to tea.

Bolton's visit to the kitchen had interrupted a

most animated debate. In that lower house of his little commonwealth the new arrival had been a fruitful topic of discussion. The speakers were three: Molly, Sam, and Binns the wheelwright, who had looked in, as he said, on a little business with the parson. Molly, as has been said, was a rigid churchwoman. Her notions of her duty in that capacity might not have been unexceptionable, but they were, so far as the Sunday went, as follows: Church in the morning and afternoon, if practicable; as much reading as her eyes—not quite what they used to be—could comfortably manage; pudding for dinner, and tea and gossip in the evening. If fine, a walk would have come among the day's arrangements; but with the rain coming down as it did, and after having rather puzzled herself with a sermon upon the origin of evil, the sudden, and in a degree mysterious, visit of a strange gentleman —where visitors of any kind were so rare—became invaluable as a topic of interesting—for aught we know, of profitable—discourse. Sam Shears dined with her always on this day, and was allowed, not without scruples, to have his pipe in the chimney-corner; in consideration of which indulgence, he felt it his duty to make himself as agreeable as possible; and inasmuch as his stock-stories respecting enormous perch caught, or gifted starlings educated by him, Samuel Shears, had long ceased to interest—indeed had never much interested—his

fair listener here, though they still went down, with variations, at the Crown and Thistle, he was reduced very often, in the absence of anything of modern interest stirring in the neighbouring town of S——, to keep up his credit as a "rare good companion," by entering into politics — for which study, next to divinity, Molly had a decided taste—talking about reforms and revolutions in a manner that Molly declared made her "creep," and varying this pleasurable excitement by gloomy forebodings with regard to "Rooshia and Prooshia."

On this particular evening, however, the subject of debate was of a domestic nature, and Molly and the clerk had taken opposite sides: Binns arriving opportunely to be appealed to by both, and being a man of few words, who shook his head with great gravity, and usually gave a nod of encouragement to the last speaker. Molly, after her first indignation at the intrusion of a wet stranger, without notice, at ten o'clock of a Saturday night, had been so softened by the courteous address and bearing of the enemy, that she had gradually admitted him at least to a neutrality; and when Sam Shears had in confidence hinted that he "hadn't quite made up his mind about un," her woman's kindness of heart, or her spirit of contradiction, rushed forth as to the rescue of a friend.

"I wonder at you, Sam," said she; "you've had heddication enough to know a gentleman when you

sees him; and you'd ought to have more respect for the cloth."

"Cloth! There now," replied Sam, "that's just it; I an't so sure about his cloth, as you call it."

"Why, what ever do you mean, Sam Shears?"

"I mean," rejoined Sam, boldly, though he felt that Molly's fiercest glance was upon him, and almost choked himself in the endeavour to hide himself in a cloud of his own creating—"I mean, I don't think as he's a regular parson. If he had been, you see, he'd have took some of the duty. Besides," continued the official, reassured by Binns' respectful attention, "we had a little talk while we was a-waiting for master after church—I offered him a humbereller, you see — and I just asked whereabouts his church was, and he looked queerish at me, and said he hadn't no church, not exactly; and then I begged his pardon, and said I thought he was a clergyman; and he said, so he was, but somehow he seemed to put me off, as it might be." Binns nodded.

"To be sure," said Molly; "and 'twas like your manners, Sam, to go questioning of him in that way."

"Bless you, I was as civil as could be; however, I say again, I 'as my doubts: he'd a quakerish-looking coat too, such as I never see'd on a regular college parson. He's the very moral of a new Irving-ite preacher."

"And what's their doctrines, Sam?" asked Molly, whose theological curiosity was irresistibly excited.

"Why," said the clerk, after a puff or two to collect his thoughts, "they believes in transmigration."

Binns made a gesture of awe and abjuration.

"Stuff!" said Molly, "that's popery: nor you don't suppose, Sam, that master would have anybody of that sort in his house—eh, Mr Binns?"

The benefit of that gentleman's opinion was lost to both parties, for it was at that juncture "master" himself entered, and having discussed his communication, which related to a sick wife, bid him call again in the morning, and the wheelwright took his leave.

"And now, Shears," said the curate, "(don't put your pipe behind you, man; do you suppose I have not smelt it this half-hour—I wish you would buy better tobacco)—you must be off to S—— to-morrow at daylight, and order a chaise to be here, for this gentleman, by nine o'clock at the latest. Do you understand, now?"

"Yes, sir, yes. I'll be sure to go. And what name shall I say, sir?"

"Name, eh! oh, it doesn't matter. Say for me, of course. And look here: there will be five shillings for you if the chaise is here in time. Ay, you may well make a bow; I told the gentleman it was too much for you."

"I'm very much obliged to you both," said Sam, slily, "I'm sure, sir; I'll be off at cock-crow."

"There, Sam Shears," said Molly, as soon as they had the kitchen to themselves again, "did you ever hear of one of your new what-d'ye-call-ums ordering a chaise to go ranting about in, I should like to know? What have you got to say now?"

"I say," said Sam, "as he's a gentleman, and no mistake."

The evening passed away very quietly in the little parlour. The favourable impression made upon Bolton by his guest's manners and conversation was certainly deepened by their further intercourse: but the position seemed felt by both parties to be an awkward one; and when his departure early on the following morning was proposed, Bolton of course made no effort to detain him. Both employed most of the evening in reading; and one or two remarks made by the stranger, as he made his selection from the curate's library, proved at least his acquaintance with the works which it contained, though nothing escaped him, as he wiped the dust from some of Harry's presentation volumes, which could indicate either his agreement or disagreement with the sound divines he was handling, and his clever criticisms were rather those of the bibliographer than the theologian. At last he seemed to bury himself in a volume of old South, and carried it off with him early to his chamber.

The morning came, and eight o'clock brought breakfast, and half-past eight the chaise, with Sam Shears fast asleep inside of it. The curate and his guest parted with mutual goodwill, and with a short but warm acknowledgment, on the part of the latter, of the hospitality he had received. Sam was not forgotten; he received the promised gratuity with many bows, and did not put his hat on again until the chaise had fairly turned the corner.

"Uncommon nice gentleman that, sir, to be sure," said he to his master, with whom he seldom missed the chance of a little conversation, if he could help it—and Bolton was generally good-natured enough to indulge him—"uncommon nice gentleman; what a thousand pities it is he should be a Methody!"

"A *what?*" inquired the curate, turning round upon him in ludicrous dismay.

"A Methody preacher, sir, said Sam, boldly; for Harry's countenance quite confirmed his suspicions. "Oh! I know all about it, sir; but it ain't of no account with me, sir, you know, not none whatever,"—and he redoubled his negatives with a confidential mysteriousness which made Harry inclined to kick him. "I met Joe Haines, as drives the Regulator, this morning, and he asked me very particular about you, you see, sir, and how you got home o' Saturday night; and then I told him as how this gentleman came with you; and

when he heard as he'd been staying here all day yesterday, how he did laugh, to be sure; and then he told me"——

"I'll tell you something, Sam, too. You had much better mind your own business, and not trouble yourself to talk to Joe Haines, or anybody else, about what goes on in my house."

There was no mistaking the fact that his master was angry; and as such a thing had very seldom happened within Sam's experience, it was a result of which he stood considerably in awe; and he hastened, with some confusion, to apologise, and to resume his praises of the "very nice gentleman, whatever he was,"—"And as you say, sir, that's no business of mine: I'm sure I should be most happy to wait upon him at any time, sir"——

But Bolton had retired, and shut the door of his little sitting-room in an unmistakable manner. So Sam was obliged to soliloquise the rest of his apologies, which began to be very sincere, as he consoled himself by gazing at the two half-crowns which had come into his possession so easily. "Of course; if so be as he's a gentleman, what matters? That's what I say: that's what I said to master: that's what I said to Molly:—hallo! hey? —if this here half-crown ain't a smasher!"

'Twas too true: it rung upon the flag-stone like an unadulterated piece of lead.

"What's the matter now, Sam?" said Mrs Molly, who heard the sound, and met his blank face in the passage.

"I told you what he was," said Sam—"look here!" Molly examined the unfortunate coin with every wish to give it the benefit of a doubt, but was obliged finally to pronounce against it. She had to listen, also, to the story which Sam had heard from Joe Haines; and though she clung pertinaciously to her previously-formed conclusions in the stranger's favour, Sam had now decidedly the best of the argument, which he clinched at last with what he considered an unanswerable proposition—"If you says as he 's a parson and a gentleman, will you give me two-and-sixpence for this here half-crown?"

Weeks passed on, and other events wore out the interest of the stranger's visit, even in those dull localities. Binns' wife had a baby; and another piece of the church roof fell in, and nearly carried Brooks the churchwarden with it, as he was mounted on a ladder estimating its repairs—for there was an archdeacon's visitation coming on, and not even the vulcanised conscience of a parish functionary could be brought to pronounce, on oath, its present state of repair to be good and sufficient. And Harry received an invitation to dine with the said archdeacon, who was a good kind of man on the whole—that is, his good qualities would not very

well bear taking to pieces—but he rather patronised the younger clergy in his neighbourhood, provided that they were young men of tolerable family, and good address, and not, as he expressed it, *ultra* in any way. It so happened, that he was almost the only acquaintance that Harry had made in the neighbourhood. He had written to request his interference in enforcing the repair of the church; and as that was a compliment seldom paid to his official dignity, the archdeacon had actually driven over thirteen miles to inspect the place personally; and, arriving quite unexpectedly, had caught the curate just sallying forth equipped for fishing—an art to which he himself occasionally condescended—for even archdeacons do unbend. And very soon ascertaining that there was no tendency to an objectionable *ultra,* of any kind, in our hero, and that he was in fact rather an eligible rear-rank man for a dinner-table, he had made a mental memorandum of the fact, and, in consequence, had twice favoured him with an invitation, which Harry, according to his present humour, had declined. On this occasion, however—as a third refusal would have seemed ungracious—he had determined to go; and, with some compunction at the expense (he had thought nothing at Oxford of a hunter, and a "team" to cover, at about five guineas for the day), he found himself in a hired gig at the archdeacon's door, a little before the dinner hour on

the day appointed. None of the guests were as yet assembled. His host, however, met him in the drawing-room, and presented him, with considerable cordiality, to his lady and her daughters.

"It was very good indeed of Mr Bolton to come so far to see us," said the archdeacon. "Indeed, I am particularly glad you came to-day," continued he, with a sort of pompous kindness, "for I have the bishop staying here, and I wished you to meet him."

Harry was interrupted in his acknowledgments by the entrance of two men of the expected party: the Honourable and Reverend Mr Luttridge, a young man, who eyed his brother curate, on his introduction, with what he intended for a critical and interrogative glance, but which had by no means the effect upon that party which he intended; and another archdeacon, or dean, or some such dignitary, who made Bolton a very low bow indeed; and, turning his back upon him forthwith, began to discourse with the other two upon the business of the last Petit Sessions. A discussion upon some point of magisterial law was interrupted by a burst of shrill and hearty laughter from the younger of the Misses Archdeacons—a fat merry girl, with whom Harry had struck up an acquaintance instantly—*that* was a point he never failed in; and although the other two gentlemen looked rather astonished, and turned round again to resume their argument, the father—she was his favourite daughter, and ludicrously

like him—was delighted to see her amused, and insisted upon knowing what the fun was between them. Some absurd remark of Harry's was repeated, as well as her continued merriment would allow her; and the archdeacon, after a preparatory shaking of his sides, had just burst into a stentorian "ha-ha," when the drawing-room door again opened, and the Bishop of F—— was most audibly announced.

Every one tried to look deferential, of course; and the two gentlemen in front of Harry separated, and took open order to receive his lordship. Everybody recovered their propriety, in fact, in an instant, except Miss Harriet, to whom a bishop was no treat at all—not to be compared with an amusing young curate. She kept her eyes fixed upon Harry Bolton—she thought he was going to faint. Could it be possible?—oh! there was no doubt about it. Schismatic Doctor Bates, or Bishop of F——, there he was!—there was the man he had walked home in the rain with!

Harry's quondam guest walked forward with an easy grace, which contrasted strikingly with the stiff dignity of his subordinates. He shook hands politely with Mr Luttridge, and returned the greeting of his companion somewhat more warmly. The archdeacon was preparing to introduce Bolton, without noticing his embarrassment, when the bishop anticipated the introductory speech by saying, as he

held out his hand, "Mr Bolton and I are old friends—may I not say so?"

A man of less self-possession than our friend the curate might have been put quite at his ease by the kind tone and manner, and warm grasp of the hand. "Certainly," was his reply, "your lordship and myself *have* met under rather different circumstances."

The archdeacon's respectable face expressed considerable astonishment, as well it might; and the other two gentlemen began to eye his lordship's "old friend" with interested and inquisitive glances.

"My dear archdeacon," said the bishop, laughing, "pardon my mystification; this is the friend with whom I spent a day or two on my last visit to this neighbourhood, when you really thought you had lost me altogether; though, if you had told me I was to have the pleasure of meeting him at your table to-day, I might, perhaps, have let you into the secret."

"But, my dear Bolton," said the host—he had dropped the Mr at once, and for ever—"why did you not tell me that you knew his lordship?—eh?"

Harry laughed, and got a little confused again; but the bishop answered the question for him, before he had time to frame an intelligible reply.

"Oh, that's a long story; but it was no mystery of Mr Bolton's, be assured. I am afraid, indeed, it will tell rather better for him than for me; but I

promise you the explanation, some day," continued the bishop, good-humouredly, "when we have nothing better to talk about." The archdeacon took the hint, and turned the conversation. Another guest or two joined the party; dinner succeeded, and passed off much as such affairs usually do. The bishop, although he did not address much of his conversation directly to Bolton, took care to make him feel at his ease; and Mr Luttridge, who sat next to him, became remarkably friendly—was quite surprised that he had not heard of him before, being, in fact, quite a near neighbour—only nine miles—nothing at all in that part of the country—should ride over to call on him one of the first days he could spare—and, in fact, said what became him to the bishop's friend and *protégé*.

Whatever curiosity might have been felt on the subject by the rest of the company, it was not until they had taken their departure that the bishop thought proper to explain to Bolton and the archdeacon the circumstances which had led to his paying an incognito visit to the former. He had only lately been appointed to the diocese, and was therefore personally known to but few of his clergy. The archdeacon and himself, however, were old college acquaintances, and he had accepted an invitation to spend a few days with him, at the time of his casual meeting with Harry Bolton. Being averse at all times to any kind of ceremony or

etiquette, which he could reasonably dispense with, it had been arranged that the archdeacon's carriage should meet him at B——, to which place his own had conveyed him. Upon his arrival in the town somewhat before the hour appointed, he had, according to his custom, walked out quietly to make himself acquainted with the localities, and had unconsciously passed some hours in exploring some ruins at a little distance. Meanwhile, the archdeacon, not so punctual as his diocesan, drove up to the hotel door in hot haste, considerably too late for his appointment, and was saluted with the unpleasant information that his lordship had been there, and was gone on these two hours,—for his previous orders had been duly obeyed, and the episcopal equipage, with a portly gentleman inside, who sustained the dignity of his position as chaplain very carefully, had really rolled away on its road homeward. The archdeacon doubted, but mine host was positive; and strengthened his position by the assertion that his lordship had said he was going to Bircham rectory, a piece of intelligence picked up from the servants, with exactly enough truth in it to do mischief. Off went the archdeacon again, annoyed at his own dilatoriness; and great was his consternation on reaching home to find no bishop; and great was the bishop's surprise, on returning at last to the hotel, to find no archdeacon; and great the confusion throughout

the King's Arms; the landlord throwing the blame upon the waiters, and the waiters upon each other. Post-horses to S——, which was within a short three miles of the archdeacon's rectory, were ordered at once. But, alas! after many delays and apologies, none were to be had; almost every quadruped in the town was engaged in taking parties home from the opening of the Independent College. The bishop was not a man to make difficulties; so, leaving his only remaining servant to await any remedial measures which the archdeacon might take when he discovered his error, and to give an intelligible account of his movements, he himself, without mentioning his intention to any other person, walked down to the coach-office at the Swan, paid his fare, and became an inside passenger by the Regulator.

Of course, when the archdeacon discovered his mistake, no time was lost in procuring fresh horses, and sending back the carriage to B——, in the hope that his lordship might still be forthcoming; but it brought back to the anxious expectants at the rectory only a servant and a portmanteau; and as they did not pass the spot where the accident occurred, and all inquiries made at S—— only resulted in the intelligence that "there had been an upset, that no one was hurt, and that the passengers had walked home," they made up their minds to await some accurate information as to his lordship's whereabouts from himself, when he relieved

his friends from their uncomfortable suspense by making his appearance personally at breakfast on the Monday morning; though, to punish, as he jokingly said, the archdeacon, for leaving him in such a predicament, he would tell them nothing more than that he had spent the Sunday very pleasantly with a friend.

Much amusement ensued at the bishop's details of his visit, though he good-naturedly avoided any allusions that could possibly be embarrassing to his late host. Bolton had accepted the offer of a bed, and it was late before they separated for the night. Before he took his leave on the following morning, the bishop, to his surprise, announced his intention of paying him a second visit. "I think, Mr Bolton," said he, "that, having intruded upon you once in disguise, as I may say, I am bound to come and preach for you some Sunday, if it be only to clear my own character in the eyes of your parishioners" (for Harry had confessed, to the exceeding amusement of all parties, his own and his clerk's suspicions). "So, if you please, and if my good friend here will accompany me, we will drive over to you next Sunday morning; and I'll try," continued the bishop slily, "if I cannot get Mr Churchwarden Brooks to put your church a little to rights for you."

The morning arrived, and the archdeacon and the bishop. A proud woman had Molly been from the

moment the announcement was made to her of the intended honour; and the luncheon which she had prepared was, considering her limited resources, something extraordinary. But when his lordship alighted, and, catching a sight of her eager face in the passage, called to her by name, and addressed her kindly—and she recognised the features of the unknown guest, whom Sam had so irreverently slandered—the good old woman, between shame and gratification, was quite overcome, and was wholly unable to recover her self-possession throughout the day. During the whole of the service, she looked at the bishop instead of the prayer-book, made responses at random, and was only saved by the good-natured interference of his lordship's own man from totally ruining the luncheon. Of course, the church was crowded; the sermon was plain and impressive: and when, after service, the whole of the rustic congregation, collected in the churchyard to see as much as they could of a personage few of them had ever seen before, formed a lane respectfully, with their hats off, for him to pass to the gate, the bishop, taking off his hat and claiming their attention for a few moments, spoke a few words, homely and audible, approving their behaviour during the service, and representing to them the advantages they might derive from the residence among them of an exemplary minister, such as he believed they had at present, and such

as he would endeavour to provide them with in the possible event of his removal. And when afterwards he begged to be introduced to the churchwarden, and, taking him familiarly by the arm, walked with him round the building, pointed out indispensable repairs, and, without any word of reproof, explained to him the harm done by injudicious patching, and put into his hands a liberal contribution towards the expenses—it might have seemed quite wonderful to those who either overrate or underrate poor human nature, how much more popular a notion, and how much better understood a bishop was in that remote village from that time forth. The landlord of the Crown and Thistle was quite surprised at the change that had come over Mr Brooks. He used to be rather a popular orator on club nights and other convivial occasions, taking that economical view of church dignitaries and their salaries which, by an amusing euphemism, is called "liberal" in politics; but subsequently to this occasion he seldom joined in these discussions, was seen less frequently by degrees in the taproom of the Crown and Thistle, and more regularly at church; and once, when hard pressed for an opinion by some of his former supporters, was asserted to have told them that the Crown and Thistle took more money out of people's pockets than ever the bishops did.

Harry had anticipated much amusement from Sam Shears' confusion, when he should encounter,

in his full canonicals, the bishop of the diocese in the person of the apocryphal Dr Bates; but whatever that worthy's secret discomfiture might have been, he carried it off wonderfully well, and met his lordship in the vestry with a lurking smile in his humble obeisance, as if he had all along penetrated the mystery of his incognito. With Molly in the kitchen, indeed, he had for some evenings a hard time of it; but a threat of absenting himself altogether, which he ventured in some fear of being taken at his word, had the effect of moderating her tone of triumph. Before the Bishop left, he called Sam aside, and presented him with a substantial token of remembrance; when Sam took the opportunity of producing, with many prefaces of apology, the condemned half-crown, which had fretted in his pocket ever since.

"Please your lordship's worship and reverence," said Sam, "this here ain't a *very* good half-crown; at least, I can't pass it noways down here. I dare say as your lordship's worship might pass it away easy enough among your friends, but—"

"Here, here," said the bishop, laughing heartily, "here's another for you, by all means, my man; but pray excuse my having anything more to do with the bad one."

Again the bishop parted from his entertainer with many expressions of regard, and an invitation to spend some time with him at his palace, which

Bolton did much to his satisfaction; and received from him so much valuable advice and paternal kindness, that he always considered the snug living with which, some months afterwards, he was presented, one of the least of his obligations.

"And that's how Harry Bolton came to be a neighbour of mine," concluded Long Lumley; "and a nice place he has here, and a capital neighbour he is."

We discussed the whole story over Lumley's wine after dinner the next day, when the Hon. and Rev. Mr Luttridge, who had since married the bishop's niece, and was said to have been a disappointed expectant of the living given to Bolton, made one of our party.

"A very odd man, certainly, the bishop is," was that gentleman's remark; "very strange, you know, to go poking about the country in that kind of way. Scarcely the thing, in fact, I must say."

"Upon my honour," said Lumley, "you parsons ought to be better judges of what is or is not 'the thing' for a bishop, than I can be; but if the Bishop of F—— is an odd man, I know, if I had the making of bishops, I'd look out for a match for him."

THE FLORIDA PIRATE.

[*MAGA.* AUGUST 1821.]

A SERIES of misfortunes had unexpectedly thrown me upon a foreign land, and entirely deprived me of the means of subsistence. I knew not where to apply for relief, or how to avoid the alarming evils that threatened me on every side. I was on one of the Bahama islands. I could not enjoy the temporary asylum I then possessed longer than two days, without involving myself in debts which I was unable to pay, and consequently bringing my person under the power of individuals, who, I was inclined to suspect, had nothing humane or generous in their characters. I wandered along the sea-shore, sometimes shuddering at the dreariness of my prospects, and sometimes trembling lest the horrors of want should urge me to obtain the necessaries of life by concealing from others that I was in absolute poverty.

When about a mile distant from the small town where I lodged, my attention was attracted by a

schooner lying at anchor behind a projecting point of land. I knew that vessels did not usually moor in such a situation, and inquired at a fisherman, whom I met on the beach, if he could tell me what the schooner did there? " I am not quite sure," returned he, " but I rather suspect she's a pirate. Those on board of her are mostly blacks, and they seem very anxious to keep out of sight. Had she been a fair trader, she would have come into the harbour at once."

This information startled me a good deal. I became excessively agitated without knowing the reason; and felt an anxious desire to repress some idea that had, as it were, arisen in my mind, without my being conscious of its existence.

I left my informant, and seated myself under a cliff. Half of the sun had disappeared below the horizon. I watched his descending orb, and wished I could retard the flight of time, when I reflected, that, after the lapse of two days, I should perhaps be destitute of an asylum, and perishing from want. " Something must be done," I exclaimed, starting up: " If these are pirates, I will join them. My profession will enable me to render them valuable services. I shall be guilty of no crime in doing so;—the law of nature compels me to violate the laws of man." I looked anxiously towards the schooner, which lay within half a mile of the shore, in hopes that I should see her boat approaching,

and thus find means of speaking with the person who commanded her.

I waited upwards of an hour, but could not discover that those on board made any preparations for coming ashore. It was now dark, and the beach was silent and deserted. I found a small boat lying upon the sand; and, having pushed her off, I cautiously embarked, and began to row towards the schooner—but, after a few strokes of the oars, my resolution almost failed. I shuddered at the idea of forming a league with the outcasts of society, and rendering myself amenable to the laws of every civilised nation. The gloom of the night, the calmness of the ocean, and the brightness of the sky, seemed to urge me to reflect upon what I was doing. I did reflect—I looked towards the town—a sense of the wretchedness of my condition struck irresistibly upon my mind, and I pushed furiously forward.

When I had got within a short distance of the schooner, one of her crew called out, "Avast, avast! whom have we here?" On reaching the side of the vessel, I said I wished to see the captain. "What do you want with him?" demanded the same voice. "I must speak with him alone," answered I. The questioner retired to the stern, and I heard the sound of people talking, as if in consultation, for a little time. I was then desired to come on board; and, the moment I stepped upon deck, a negro led me towards a man who stood near the helm.

He was very tall and athletic, and of a jet black, and wore only a shirt and white trousers. His face had a bold and contemplative expression, and he wanted his right hand. "I presume you are the commander of this vessel," said I. He nodded impatiently. "I understand you are going upon an expedition."—"I don't care what you understand —to your business, master," returned he, haughtily. "I know you are pirates," continued I, "and it is my wish to accompany you in the capacity of a medical attendant." He surveyed me with a look of astonishment, that seemed to demand an avowal of the motives that had prompted me to make such a proposal. "You surely will not decline my offer," said I, "for you must be aware that I am able to render you very essential services. I have been unfortunate every way, and——" "O, you be unfortunate! and seek relief from a black man—from a negro!" interrupted he, with a scornful laugh. "Well, stay on board; you cannot leave this vessel again. Remember, we are not to be betrayed." "But I have something on shore that I wish to carry along with me." "I will send one of my men for it," replied he, "to-morrow morning at dawn."

He walked coolly away to the bows of the vessel, and began to give some orders to the seamen, who formed a very numerous body. Most of them were loitering together on the forecastle, and smoking

cigars, and they all seemed to be blacks. French and English were spoken indiscriminately among them; and their conversation was incessant and vociferous, and intermingled with disgusting execrations. Several disputes took place, in the course of which the parties struck each other, and wrestled together; but their companions neither endeavoured to separate them, nor paid any attention to the affrays. They appeared to have a set of jests, the spirit of which was intelligible to themselves alone; for they frequently gave way to violent laughter, when their conversation, taken in a literal sense, expressed nothing that could excite mirth.

When it was near midnight, the captain, whose name was Manuel, conducted me to the cabin, and made many inquiries, which evidently had for their object to discover if I really was what I professed to be. His doubts being removed, he pointed to a berth, and told me I might occupy it whenever I chose, and went upon deck again. I extinguished the light, and lay down in bed. The enthusiasm of desperation, and the pride of deciding with boldness and alacrity, had now subsided, and I could calmly reflect upon what I had done. My anticipations respecting the life I was now to lead were gloomy and revolting. I scarcely dared to look forward to the termination of the enterprise in which I had embarked; but, when I considered what would have been my fate had I remained on shore, I could

not condemn my choice. Contempt, abject poverty, and the horrors of want, were the evils I fled from —tyranny, danger, and an ignominious death, formed those towards which I was perhaps hastening.

Next morning, Captain Manuel desired me to write an order for my portmanteau, that he might send one of his men to bring it on board. I obeyed him, and also enclosed the sum I owed the persons with whom I had resided. Shortly after the messenger returned the crew began to heave up the anchor; and we soon put to sea with a light wind, and gradually receded from the shores of the island.

I breakfasted in the cabin with Manuel. His manner was chilly and supercilious; and he had more dignity about him than any negro I had ever before seen. The want of his right hand made his person very striking; and he seemed aware of this: for when he observed me gazing on the mutilated arm, he frowned, and enveloped it in the folds of the table-cloth.

We lost sight of land in a few hours, but I knew not where we were bound, and Manuel's reserved behaviour prevented me from making any inquiry. He walked upon deck all day with folded arms, and scarcely ever raised his eyes, except to look at the compass, or give directions to the helmsman.

The schooner, which was named the Esperanza, was about one hundred and twenty tons burden, carried six guns, and had forty-three men on board

of her, and several boys. There appeared to be very little discipline among the crew; all of whom amused themselves in any way, and in any place, they chose, except when the working of the vessel required their attention. The presence of the captain did not impose any restraint upon them; and one who was called the mate snatched a chart unceremoniously from his hand, and told him he did not know what he was about, without receiving any reproof for his insolence. A number of the negroes lay round the fire, roasting ears of Indian corn, which were eagerly snatched off the embers the moment they were ready. An expression of disgusting sensuality characterised this part of the crew; and they looked as if they were strangers to retrospection and anticipation, and felt existence only in so far as the passing moment was concerned. One man, of a mild aspect, sat at a distance from the others, and played upon an old guitar. Many were half naked, and I could distinguish the marks of the whip on the shoulders of some of them. The limbs of others had been distorted by the weight and galling of fetters, as was evident from the indentations exhibited by their flesh.

On awaking the second morning of the voyage, I found that Manuel was still asleep. The difficulty of the navigation had obliged him to keep on deck all night, that he might direct the course of the vessel, and he was now reposing himself after the

fatigues of his long watch. The crew were preparing breakfast, and conversing together.

Some dispute took place about the distribution of the provisions, and one of them called the other a rascally runaway. "You lie," cried the accused person, "I guess you're something worse yourself, Philip."—"You had as well be quiet, Antony. Has any body anything to say against me?"—"Why, that you're a Yankey slave, that's all," returned Philip. "Damn you," cried he, "I'm a free man—yes, free and independent." Here they all laughed loudly, and he demanded with fury who would venture to contradict him, or to assert that he had a master. "Why, we know well enough you ha'n't a master *now*, you pricked him under the ribs," replied one of the crew. This excited another laugh, and Antony cried, "Curse you for a *niger*—belike I'll do the same to you."—"Don't be calling me a niger," said Philip, "I was born in the States."—"I wouldn't believe it," said Antony, "for you know no more than if you was fresh off the coast—You can't roast corn."

"Come, let us to breakfast," interrupted another, "and leave these two black sheep to fight together, as soon as they can pick up courage."—"I'm sure you've nothing to say, Mandingo," cried Antony; "you can't tell where you came from."—"To be sure I can," answered Mandingo, "I was very ill used by my master, and made my escape."—"Yes,

from the gallows," cried one of the crew, to the great amusement of the others.

"I guess there's ne'er a man on board this schooner whose life can be better looked into than mine," said a negro, who had not before spoken—"I was born in a Christian country, and when I was twenty years old, a great army captain made me his servant. I had the care of all his money and clothes, and could do what I pleased. I went to plays and *consorts*, and was so like a gentleman that a white mistress fell in love with me, and we were married. What a grand sight the marriage was! My master gave me a gold ring to put on my wife's finger."—"And did you put it on her finger?" demanded Antony.—"Why do you ask that?"—"Because I guess from the look of your shins, that you put it on your own leg." The whole crew joined in a loud laugh, and looked at the limb of the first speaker, which was strongly galled by fetters. "It must have been a pretty heavy ring," said Antony; "and yet, for all the gold that was in it, I daresay you was glad to get quit of it."—"I've done," returned the object of their ridicule; "I'll say no more. I thought I was speaking to gentlemen."—"Never mind him. We are all liable to flesh-marks," observed Philip. "There now, what say you of our captain's wanting a——" "Hush, hush," interrupted Mandingo, "that is a sore subject."

In the course of three days, we came in sight of the north shore of Cuba; but to my great satisfaction had not met with a single vessel of any description. Manuel hourly became less reserved, and we often had long conversations together; and one evening he promised to relate the history of his life to me, the first favourable opportunity.

After cruising about for a week, we cast anchor at the mouth of the Xibara harbour, which lies near the eastern extremity of Cuba. Our object in doing so was to obtain a supply of firewood from the banks of a small river that disembogues into the harbour. Manuel requested me to accompany the party destined for this purpose, as he was to command it; and at a late hour one night we set out in a boat, along with seven of the crew.

The weather was clear, calm, and delightful; and we soon entered the river, and rowed slowly up its windings. The banks were for the most part thickly covered with trees, which over-arched us completely, and rendered it so dark that Manuel could scarcely see to steer the boat. We sometimes could discern far before us a portion of the sky vividly reflected in the bosom of the stream—bright and dazzling, amidst the surrounding gloom, as the contrast of divine purity with mortal corruption. Not a sound could be heard, except the regular dashing of the oars, and the rustling of fields of Indian corn, shaken by the wind. The most deli-

cious perfumes filled the air, and fruits of different kinds, that had apparently just dropt from the tree, floated past us, silently proclaiming the luxuriance of the region that bordered both sides of the river.

I sat in the stern of the boat beside Manuel, but neither of us spoke a word. The emotions produced by the surrounding objects were so delightful, that the mind contentedly remained in a state of passiveness, receiving, without resistance, every idea that presented itself. Within the space of an hour I had exchanged the confinement and pitching of a vessel, the monotony of a sea prospect, and the noise and brutality of a set of criminals, for the harmony of wood and water—the richness of vegetable perfumes, and the quiet enjoyment of an inspiring summer's night.

When we had got about two miles above the mouth of the river, the men disembarked, and began to cut wood at a little distance from us. "I believe my people are out of hearing," said Manuel, after a long pause, "and while we wait for their return, I shall tell you something about my past life.

"I need not give you a minute account of my early years, as they were not distinguished by anything remarkable. My mother came from the coast of Africa, but I was born in South Carolina, where my master had a large estate, in the cultivation of which more than one hundred negroes were employed. My mother being a house-servant, was

exempted from many of the hardships and privations to which the other slaves were exposed, but she owed the comparative comfort of her situation entirely to her capability of ministering to the voluptuousness of Mr Sexton, who was much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He gave orders that I should be brought up within doors, as he intended me for a waiting man.

"After I had attained the age of sixteen years, I was obliged to be in continual attendance upon my master, and to submit quietly to all his caprices. The treatment I received from him, and the knowledge I acquired of his character, made me feel what a degrading thing slavery was. Had I been forced to work in the fields, like the other negroes, I might not perhaps have repined at my condition, because I would have known nothing better, and at the same time believed that my condition was irremediable, and consistent with the laws of nature. But being continually in the presence of Mr Sexton, and of other white people, and daily hearing their conversation, I soon discovered that they were superior to us in nothing but knowledge; that they were mean, wicked, cruel, and unjust; and that they sometimes feared we would assert our rights, and overpower them by numbers.

"They seemed to consider negroes as creatures who were destitute of souls and understandings. Though I felt indignant when I heard these opinions

uttered, I was aware that I derived some advantage from their being acted upon; for my master and his friends, not believing that I could comprehend a sentence of their conversation, felt no restraint when I was present, and thus afforded me an opportunity of hearing their sentiments upon every subject, and becoming acquainted with their principles and characters.

"Often, while waiting at table, and listening to their disgusting opinions, I have been called forward by one of them, and struck severely on the face, for some trivial mistake I had committed in serving him with food or wine. In South Carolina, the guests do not hesitate to chastise their entertainer's servants, whenever they feel inclined; and a party of white people there often make the cursing and beating of the slaves in attendance their chief employment during dinner. On such occasions, the burning tears of resentment would rush into my eyes, I would tremble with ill-dissembled rage, and implore the God of my fathers to let loose his rage upon my tormentors, although I should become its victim along with them.

"There was an old free negro upon the plantation, who had travelled through the Northern States of America. He could read and write tolerably well, and knew a good deal about the countries he had visited. I happened to become a favourite of his, and he often gave me minute accounts of the condi-

tion of the Africans who lived in New York, and contrasted their independence with the abject state of our race everywhere else. I listened to these details with the deepest attention, which pleased him so much, that he offered to teach me to read. I gladly availed myself of his instructions, and profited so much by them, that in the course of five or six months, I was able to peruse the newspapers which my master received from different parts of the Union; many of them contained paragraphs upon the subject of slavery, and I was delighted to find that some men exclaimed against it, and denied that white people had the least right to tyrannise over negroes.

"I used often to steal into my master's room, when he slept, and read the New York Journals. One afternoon he caught me with one in my hand, and demanded angrily what I was doing. I told him I was reading. He struck me a violent blow on the head with his cane, and said he would order me forty lashes if I ever again looked at a book or newspaper. He soon discovered that the old negro had been my teacher, and immediately sent him off the estate, not being able to inflict any other punishment, in consequence of his having purchased his freedom.

"Next day, a neighbouring planter called upon Mr Sexton, and the latter, in the course of conversation, said, 'What do you think I caught that

young hell-dog doing the other night? He was reading a newspaper.' The other broke into a loud laugh, and cried, 'Why didn't you kill him? Were any of my negroes able to read, I would soon flog the scholarship out of them. Why, the little devil will begin to direct you now to manage your estate by-and-by.'—'Oh, I'll bring him to his senses,' returned my master; 'Hark ye, fellow,' continued he, addressing himself to me, 'if you ever look at a printed paper again, I'll put out your eyes with a red-hot poker. The whole of your duty is to clean the knives, and wait at table. Damn me, if I don't make it pretty bad for any fellow of mine who does either more or less than I want him to do.'

"I easily perceived that my master and his friend were aware that their strength lay in our ignorance, and feared lest the slightest acquisition of knowledge should enable us to discover that they had not a shadow of right to enslave and tyrannise over our race. What excuse is there for the oppressor, when he is conscious of being guilty of oppression!

"As my ideas expanded, my situation gradually became more intolerable. I had no one to whom I could communicate my thoughts. My fellow-slaves were so ignorant and degraded, that I could hardly look at them without pity and disgust. I used to watch them when they assembled to receive their weekly allowance of provisions. Worn out by fatigue, clad in rags, and branded with lashes, they

would wait for their respective portions with eager greediness, and then hurry away in a state of tumultuous delight, which was scarcely repressed by the clanking of the overseer's whip behind them. They had sunk so low that they seemed willing to accept life upon any terms.

"In the midst of my misery I became attached to a young girl named Sabrina. She was a slave upon the adjoining estate, and therefore we seldom had an opportunity of seeing each other except by stealth. I used to leave my master's house at midnight, when every one was in bed, and go across the plantation to the huts in which Sabrina and her mother lived. But Mr Sexton once awoke during my absence on one of these nocturnal visits, and the whole affair was soon discovered. He flogged me severely, and ordered me to remain at home in future; and the proprietor of the adjoining estate, to whom he made a complaint, caused Sabrina's hut to be burned to the ground, that it might no longer afford us a place of meeting. I became half-maddened with rage and misery. However, my feelings were unnoticed or disregarded by Mr Sexton, who, like other American planters, did not believe that negroes were susceptible of love or sorrow.

"Mr Sexton had a daughter, who resided in the house with him, and took charge of his domestic affairs. The proprietor of the adjoining estate, whose name was Lusher, loved her, and wished to

marry her, but Mr Sexton would not consent to their union, and prohibited all correspondence between them. However, notwithstanding this, they sometimes met in secret, and often wrote to each other. Miss Sexton privately employed me to carry her letters to Mr Lusher, promising that she would satisfy her father respecting my absence should he discover it, and likewise secure me from any risk of suffering punishment on her account. I willingly became a channel of communication between the two lovers, for I hoped by doing so to be able to forward my own views.

"One day I ventured to hint to Miss Sexton that I expected some little reward for my services, and begged her to entreat her father to purchase Sabrina, and bring her upon his estate, that we might get married. She engaged to propose the thing to him, and really did so; but he refused to agree to it, and, at the same time, told her that he suspected she had some private reasons for interceding so strongly in my behalf, and was resolved to discover what they were.

"Shortly after this Miss Sexton desired me to carry a letter to the next estate, and bid me be extremely cautious lest her father should see me going there, but said that if he did, she would find means to shield me from all blame. I took a by-path which led across our plantation, and reached Mr Lusher's house without interruption; however, he

was not at home, and the servants pointed to a small building a little way off, and told me I would find him there.

"On entering it the first object that struck my eyes was poor Sabrina, whom I had not seen for many weeks. She lay upon some planks which were covered with the dry husks of Indian corn, and seemed to be dying. The place had no window in it, and an old negro woman sat beside her, holding a candle, while Mr Lusher and a medical man stood at the foot of the bed. The doctor muttered, 'She's been a fine slave—confounded pity to lose her—can't help it though;' and then began to whistle and play with his cane. 'What an unfortunate devil I am!' exclaimed Mr Lusher, angrily. 'Hang her for falling sick—what right has a *niger* to fall sick?—Ods, I believe she was not sound when I bought her—I'll trounce somebody for that. So you think there's no chance of her hoeing any more corn?'—'No, no,' returned the doctor, laughing; 'I wouldn't like to have as little chance of eating my dinner to-day as she has of living two hours.'

"I stood in agony, not daring to express my feelings. I advanced towards Sabrina, and took hold of her arm. She raised her eyes, but it was only that I might see their lustre extinguished, for in a moment or two she fell dead upon her pillow. 'Ah, she's given you the slip,' said the doctor. Mr

Lusher cried, 'Damn her soul to hell—there's four hundred dollars lost,' and hurried away, banging the door furiously behind him.

"However, he soon returned; and seeing me gazing on Sabrina, asked what I did there. I said I had a letter for him, and delivered it. 'Oh,' cries he, 'you're the fellow that wanted that girl for a wife. I wish Mr Sexton had bought her, and then the loss would have fallen on his shoulders. Well, you may take her now, and bury her, or marry her—whichever you like. Begone, I don't want you.'

"I hurried home, equally afflicted at the death of Sabrina, and enraged by the inhuman insults I had received from her master. When I had come within a little distance of the house, I observed Mr Sexton and his daughter walking towards me. 'How do you do, Manuel?' cried he, in that style of derision which he always assumed when infuriated with passion; 'I hope your walk has been a pleasant one. Be so good as suggest what improvements ought to be made on this estate. Do the crops look well? Slave! baboon! imp of the devil! where have you been?'

"I made no reply, but looked to Miss Sexton. She coloured, and cried, 'What does the wretch mean by looking at me? You surely do not say that I sent you anywhere.'—'Answer me,' vociferated her father, raising his cane. 'Miss Sexton will inform you,' returned I. 'This is beyond

my patience!' exclaimed she. 'I'll tell you how it is, father—he has been paying a visit to Sabrina, notwithstanding your orders to the contrary, and wishes to make you believe that I sent him somewhere. Manuel, say instantly if you saw Sabrina this morning.'—'Yes,' answered I, 'I did, but——' 'None of your buts, you equivocating villain!' interrupted my master. Stung with indignation at Miss Sexton's ingratitude, I cried out, 'Your daughter sent me with a letter to Mr Lusher.' 'What! you give us the lie then?' replied Mr Sexton, striking me over the head. I returned the blow with my fist, and he fell flat upon the ground.

"Miss Sexton shrieked loudly, and the overseer, followed by several slaves, hastened towards me with a drawn cutlass in his hand. I made no resistance, and was immediately seized and bound. My master received very little injury from the blow, but his lips quivered with rage; and having given orders that I should be put in confinement, he walked toward the house crying out, 'Struck by a slave! struck by a slave!—It is impossible! Am I dreaming?—Does God Almighty really permit this?—A slave! a black! a negro!—Strike me—a noble Carolinian! Is there a law to punish this? Law—nonsense—tortures, death, eternal curses!'

"I was immediately thrown into a dark apartment in a large store-house, and remained there all night without being visited by any one. In

the morning the overseer took me out and made one of the negroes flog me severely, in presence of Mr Sexton and his daughter. My sufferings were dreadful. In short, I was indicted for striking my master, and tried, and found guilty. You know the punishment which the law awards in such cases; it was inflicted upon me. They cut off my right hand!—they cut off my right hand!" Here Manuel stretched out the mutilated arm, and sobbed convulsively. "But thank God I've another," continued he, vehemently; "and may it never be better employed than in resenting the tyranny of slave-masters. Oh! that every negro in the Southern States would risk the loss of his right hand by doing what I have done! then would we prove that our race was not made to be trampled upon. But let me proceed.

"I was confined in jail for three months, and then sent back to my master. I anticipated a life of wretchedness, and was not mistaken. Scarcely a day passed, in the course of which Mr Sexton did not find an excuse for punishing me. As the want of my hand rendered me unable to do the duties of a house-servant, I was employed in tending the cattle, and thus had many opportunities of conversing with my fellow-slaves who worked out of doors. I confided my thoughts to three of them, who seemed willing to attempt the execution of any project, however daring. In short, we deter-

mined to burn our master's house, and spent much time in planning how we could best effect this without the risk of being discovered.

"At last we fixed upon a time for our revenge. It was a holiday among the negroes, who were all amusing themselves in various ways on different parts of the estate. My master was dining with a planter in the neighbourhood; and as part of his road lay through a retired forest, we resolved to intercept him on his way home, lest his presence there should prove any hindrance to the success of our scheme.

"We had, at different times, placed combustibles in those parts of his house and offices that were least exposed to observation. About eight in the evening we set fire to them, and then hastened to the wood, and stationed ourselves among the trees which bordered the road. We had scarcely waited half-an-hour when we saw smoke beginning to ascend from the house, which was nearly a mile distant, and heard a tumultuous noise of voices. I gazed and listened with silent satisfaction till my master made his appearance. He was in a gig, and a negro rode on horseback behind him. Two of my companions seized the reins of the horses, and, assisted by a third, I dragged Mr Sexton out of his carriage. He was almost speechless with indignation and terror, and doubtless supposed that I intended murdering him. He soon began to entreat for mercy in the

most abject manner, solemnly promising that he would grant me my freedom if I allowed him to go home unmolested. 'You may well desire to be at home,' said I—'Look to the south.'—'Ha,' cried he, 'what do you mean? Desperate wretch, have you taken your revenge already?—My house is on fire!—But if I cannot punish you, others will suffer for this!'

"We now bound him to a tree, with his face towards the conflagration, which had evidently increased very much. A bright glare of light extended far over the sky, and tinged the tops of the trees like the setting sun; volumes of smoke rose from two different spots; we heard the negroes shouting confusedly; and the crackling, crashing, and thundering of timbers falling to the ground, announced that the work of destruction made furious progress.

"Having secured the negro-man in the same way as Mr Sexton, and tied the horses lest they should go to the house and be the means of inducing the people there to set out in quest of my master, we left them, and plunged into the recesses of the forest. We travelled all night towards the seashore, but did not venture to pass through any inhabited place. The want of my hand rendered my appearance too remarkable to allow me to hope that I would escape notice. I need not describe the hardships we encountered during our journey. In two days we reached the coast, where we stole a

boat and put out to sea, intending, if possible, to elude any search that might be made for us. We soon fell in with a pirate, who immediately took us on board, and I gradually acquired some knowledge of seamanship. We cruised about for a considerable time, and got a great many prizes, but our vessel at last became so generally known, that the captain could not continue to sail her without running much risk of being captured. He therefore went into a port in one of the West India islands, and managed to get her sold. He paid his crew very generously, and by means of his bounty, and a series of fortunate accidents, I was enabled to purchase this schooner and to commence pirate myself. My mode of life is far from being an agreeable one, and I have as yet made but little of it. However, I have a more exalted object in view than mere gain. You must not judge of my character by that of the persons with whom you see me surrounded. I am well aware that my crew is composed of the lowest and most debased part of society, and often feel ashamed of the concessions I am obliged to make them. They consider themselves on an equality with me, and will not submit to any kind of discipline, beyond what mutual security and self-preservation render necessary. But I value and endure them only in so far as they are the means of forwarding my views. I would consider it an insult to be classed with such desperadoes."

Here Manuel ceased speaking. I did not venture to make any comments upon his story, and we sat in silence till the men came to the side of the river with a large quantity of firewood. We immediately took it on board the boat, and rowed down the stream, and reached the schooner a short time before dawn. At sunrise we weighed anchor, and put to sea again.

Next day, while walking the deck, I heard one negro say to another, "Mark, what was that you was telling me about Cæsar having been hanged at Baltimore?"—"Why, only that he was hanged," replied Mark. "When I was last ashore, I heard so from one who had read it in a newspaper."—"What did they make him swing for?" inquired the first, whose name was Mendez. "Did he look sulky at his master, break a wine-glass, or bring him a knife when he wanted a fork?"—"No, no, he did nothing so bad as that," replied Mark, laughing. "He was a cruiser, like our Captain, and meeting with a vessel, he went on board and helped himself to some biscuit and rum, and a little hard cash. Her crew wished to put him on short allowance, but he took what he wanted in spite of them all. He was afterwards caught by a Yankee ship-of-war, and carried to Baltimore. The folks there found him guilty of piracy, as they called it, and hanged him and some of his crew besides."

"Why, I think," said Mendez, "he had a right

to taste the rum, if he had helped to make as much of it as you and I have done. We negers have a pretty time of it. They won't let us live by land or by water. I wonder if we could please our masters by flying in the air? Why, now, wasn't Cæsar hanged for what we've been doing?"—"To be sure he was," returned Mark; "we must keep a sharp look-out. I guess our best plan will be to hinder any one from ever becoming a witness against us." "How can we manage that?" demanded Mendez. —"Why, by *pinking* a hole in the bottom of our prizes, and making those on board of them drink our healths in salt-water," said Mark. "Dead men tell no tales, you know." "Well, I conclude it our only way," replied Mendez, "though I should feel a little strange about sending a crew of white men to hell in a moment."—"Why, they must all go there at last, you fool," returned Mark; "think of the floggings you've got."—"Ha, your words sound in my ear like the crack of a whip," cried Mendez. "But I wonder the Yankees don't know better than to hang us for being pirates. They can't suppose that we'll be so soft *now* as to let away the people who fall into our hands, and so give them a chance of informing against us. I'll bet you we'll kill five whites for every negro that is hanged."—"Ay, and more too, if we choose," said Mark. "Oh, we've a weary time of it, for most people think that we blacks do not deserve to live, unless we are slaves

and beasts of burden. Faith, I'm getting tired of a sea-life. If I could but scrape together four hundred dollars, I would give up cruising, and go to St Domingo."—"Why, you could have made that sum when you was last in Charleston," returned Mendez. —"How so?" inquired his companion.—"Wasn't you advertised as an outlaw?" said Mendez—"Wasn't there a price set upon your life? you should have cut off your head and carried it to the magistrates, and demanded the sum that they offered for it."—"Damn it now, Mendez, don't begin to run me," cried Mark, laughing. "I would have been a pretty figure without a head upon my shoulders."—"Ah," returned the other, "if you ever had had one upon them, you would not have let slip such a good opportunity of making money."

We had now been cruising about for nearly three weeks without ever seeing a vessel. The mental and bodily inaction which had characterised the course of my life during that period were very depressing, and I began to wish for the appearance of a ship almost as ardently as the crew, though from totally different motives. Manuel neither seemed to feel much weariness nor impatience. He spent most of his time upon deck, and when the navigation of the schooner did not require his attention, he lay along the companion, basking in the sun, and smoking a cigar. He sometimes entered into familiar conversation with the seamen,

though, in doing so, his object evidently was to keep them in good humour, rather than to amuse or gratify himself.

One morning, Manuel, after having looked through his glass at intervals during nearly two hours, announced that he saw a vessel off our lee-bow, and gave orders that the deck should be cleared, and the guns got ready for action. In a moment everything was bustle and confusion. On the word of command being given, the negroes threw off a large part of their clothes, and dispersed over different parts of the schooner, shouting to each other, and hurrying through their respective duties with a violence and eagerness which showed how congenial the prospect of bloodshed, oppression, and plunder, was to their feelings. They soon began to converse gaily and unconcernedly. One talked of the resistance we should probably meet with from the vessel we were in chase of; another jestingly said "he wished to write his will," and mentioned what articles he intended bequeathing to his companions, should he perish in the conflict; a third complained of the defective state of his wardrobe, and enumerated the additions he hoped to make to it, when the anticipated prize fell into our hands. Manuel walked anxiously about the deck, sometimes looking through his glass, and sometimes giving directions to the helmsman.

I alone remained unoccupied and unattended to

amidst the general activity. The quiescent and monotonous life I had led since I came on board the schooner, had lulled me into a forgetfulness of my real situation, all the horrors of which now burst upon my mind with appalling force. I had outlawed myself from society. I was surrounded with wretches, with whom I could have no community of feeling. I was soon to become, as it were, an accomplice in the work of rapine and bloodshed. We might, perhaps, be overpowered by those whom we proposed to attack, and I should be seized and classed with pirates. There was no one to testify my innocence, to prove that I had no connection with the guilty, or to save me from an ignominious death.

We soon discovered that the object of our pursuit was a brig of about two hundred tons burden. She seemed to suspect what we were, for she made all sail, and began to go large, although she had kept very close hauled before perceiving us; but our schooner, being very fast, and to the windward of her, gained upon her every moment.

About mid-day, we came within shot of the brig, and Manuel ordered a gun to be fired, as a signal for her to heave to. She paid no attention to it, and her crew seemed to be preparing for defence. He then pointed a cannon himself, and sent a ball through the lower part of her main-sail; but this not being what he wanted, he aimed again, and disabled her rudder.

She was now completely in our power, and we came within thirty yards of her. The boat being lowered down, Manuel, and fifteen of his crew, under arms, embarked, and rowed alongside of the brig, and ascended her gangway without meeting with any resistance. The Captain immediately advanced towards them, and said, "What right have you to stop me in the high seas?"—"Right! right!" returned Manuel; "none that I know of—only I'm stronger than you—but show me your manifest."—"That I cannot do," cried the Captain, "unless you promise——" "I'll promise nothing," interrupted Manuel; "yes, yes, one thing; none of you shall be maltreated, unless you offer to oppose my orders."—"Fine conditions, indeed!" exclaimed the Captain; "Be pleased to tell me what you want here?"—"Bring me your manifest," replied Manuel, "and then I'll inform you. I mean to take whatever part of your cargo I choose, and likewise all the specie that is on board. Come down to the cabin, I must not be detained."

They now both went below, and the negroes having received a signal from Manuel, ranged themselves on each side of the companion. They had scarcely done this, when a voice requested them to make way, and a gentleman, with a young lady leaning on his arm, and followed by a mulatto woman, came upon deck. They looked around them with an expression of terror and astonishment. The

young lady on seeing the blacks turned pale, and clung tremblingly to her protector's arm, and said something to him, but in such a low tone of voice that nothing but the word father was distinguishable. The gentleman once or twice seemed to be on the point of addressing the negroes, but he suddenly stopped as if aware that interference was useless.

A dead silence prevailed upon deck for some time, but the countenances of the different parties who occupied it, expressed more than words could have done. The females betrayed marks of deadening fear; the crew of the brig evidently struggled to resist the impulses of indignation, and the negroes seemed full of hope and impatience.

The young lady wore a beautiful Indian shawl, and one of the blacks, smiling to his companions, stepped forward and pulled it off her shoulders. Her father, furious at this insult, seized a block that lay near him, and struck the daring wretch upon the face with so much violence that he staggered back, and nearly fell into the hold. However, he quickly recovered himself, and rushing forwards, plunged his cutlass into the side of his antagonist, who dropped, apparently lifeless, upon deck. The seamen belonging to the brig could no longer restrain themselves; a loud cry burst from them, and they hastily seized the murderer, and threw him overboard; but being an expert swimmer, he soon

gained the surface of the water, and made furiously towards the vessel's side, with flashing eyes and loud curses. The noise of the affray brought the Captain and Manuel from the cabin, and the first object that struck the eyes of the latter was the wounded man weltering in blood, and supported in the arms of his daughter. "Who did this?" cried Manuel, with a voice half suffocated with emotion. The assassin was standing upon the chains, and endeavouring to climb over the bulwarks, when some one pointed him out. Manuel drew a pistol from his bosom, and fired at the negro's head; the ball took effect. Its victim lost hold of the rigging, sprang convulsively upwards, and fell headlong among the waves. A murmur of applause proceeded from the crew; but the blacks shrank away with baleful frowns from Manuel, who, turning, to the Captain, said haughtily, "This is my discipline!" and then took a paper out of his pocket and began to read.

The young lady's father, whose name was Mr R——, was now conveyed to the cabin, and accompanied by his daughter and her attendant, the Mulatto woman. Manuel then ordered his men to lift the hatches, and descended through one of them into the hold. After a little time he returned, and pointed out what articles he wished to have brought upon deck. The negroes set to work, and presently every part of the vessel was covered with bales,

casks, and packages, while Manuel walked coolly among them, and selected such as he conceived to be most useful and valuable. His men would evidently have begun to plunder privately, had they not been restrained by fear; but the instance of their leader's severity which they had just witnessed, seemed to dwell upon their minds, for while occupied in getting out the cargo, they muttered threats, and viewed him with scowling and wrathful looks.

Manuel having collected together all the articles he wanted, ordered them to be handed into the boat, which he sent off with part of his men to the schooner. He retained in his hand a bag of specie, and several other things. The boat being unloaded, they returned to take him on board his own vessel, and as he was descending the gangway of the brig, he bowed to her Captain, and said, "I wish you a good voyage, sir."

On reaching the schooner, Manuel ordered the crew to hoist up the boat and to bear away; however, the wind was light and baffling, and we made but little progress. I fixed my eyes upon the brig as we gradually receded from her, and reflected upon the unhappy situation of Mr R—— and his daughter, in both of whom I felt powerfully interested. I had several times been on the point of entreating Manuel to allow me to assist the wounded man; but he had always turned away, as if aware of what I intended, and unwilling to render himself

chargeable with inhumanity by refusing to grant my request. I now ventured to address him on the subject. "We cannot part with you," said he; "if we did, it might ruin us all. He who becomes a pirate, must die a pirate. There is no middle course. I fervently hope Mr R—— may recover. I have at least executed justice upon his murderer. Perhaps you may think me a murderer myself, but I did no more than was necessary. My crew are not to be restrained except by very terrible means. And yet," continued he, starting, "in my anxiety to save others, I have perhaps brought destruction upon myself. I am guilty of murder; there are plenty of witnesses to prove it.—Oh that both my hands had been cut off, then I could not have committed this rash act, which at once puts me on a level with my crew. Good-night, good-night. Go to sleep."

About two hours after sunset I retired to my berth; but the events of the day had made such a strong impression that I could not sleep, and I rose at midnight and went upon deck. It was clear moonlight, and perfectly calm. On looking for the brig, I perceived, to my astonishment, that she lay within a mile of us, and had heeled over so much, that she seemed almost on her beam-ends. I immediately informed Manuel of this, and he looked at her through his night glass, and said she was aground upon a sand-bank. "What is to be done?" cried I; "you surely will not allow those on board to perish?" "To-morrow's dawn shall determine that," returned he.

At daybreak we found that the brig was still in the situation already described, and Manuel, accompanied by me and several of the crew, went towards her in the boat. The Captain seemed at a loss how to receive us, being doubtful whether our intentions were hostile or friendly; but when we had satisfied him on this point, he informed us that his vessel, having become quite unmanageable in consequence of the loss of her rudder, had drifted away towards a sand-bank, and run hard aground the preceding night. We soon ascertained that her bottom was a good deal damaged, and that she could not be got off. "This brig will go to pieces the first time there is a heavy sea," said Manuel to the Captain; "and those who remain in her must perish. I will take you all on board my schooner, and put you ashore about forty miles above Matanzas, seeking no compensation but part of the cargo, which you of course have no means of preserving." After some deliberation this proposal was acceded to by all parties, and Manuel's crew again began to unload the brig.

While they were thus engaged I went down to the cabin, and found Mr R—— and his daughter there. The former had a look of ghastliness which gave me an unfavourable idea of the nature of his wound; and the latter sat beside his bed, and seemed at once hopeless and resigned. On seeing me they both started, but said nothing. I told them that, although I came along with the pirates,

I had no connection with such persons, and that my object in intruding upon them was to offer my professional services to Mr R——. The young lady sprung from her chair, and expressed her gratitude in the warmest manner, while her father's flushed countenance and beaming eyes evinced that hopes of life began to revive in his heart.

When Manuel had carried away as much of the cargo as his vessel could conveniently contain, he informed us that the boat was ready to take us all on board the schooner; we accordingly embarked, placing Mr R—— upon a mattress, and rowed away from the brig, towards which the Captain and his crew directed many anxious and regretful looks.

On getting on board the schooner, our first object was to contrive accommodations for so many new passengers. I resigned my berth to Mr R——, and Manuel allowed the young lady and her attendant to occupy his state-room. The Captain and his crew reposed upon deck, but the latter were so indignant at the familiarity with which the negroes treated them, that they would have resented it by force, had not the fear of being overcome by superior numbers restrained their fury. However, the two parties poured forth torrents of abuse against each other; and the clamour of their tongues, the groans of Mr R——, the agonies of his daughter, and the confinement of a crowded vessel, all combined to render the day and succeeding night insupportably tedious and distressing to me.

In about forty hours we made the Pan of Matanzas, and Manuel told the Captain and the white crew to hold themselves in readiness, as he soon intended to put them ashore. At sunset we were scarcely two leagues from the coast of Cuba. The negroes lowered a small boat, and stowed a quantity of water and provisions in her; and Manuel came down to the cabin, and informed Mr R—— and his daughter that it was time for them to embark. "Where?—What do you mean?" cried the young lady.—"Why, madam," returned Manuel, "didn't I say that all the people belonging to the brig were to put ashore here?"—"Oh, thanked be Heaven," exclaimed she; "then we are near a harbour and a town?—My dear father!"—"No, no," interrupted Manuel, "the coast opposite is uninhabited."—"What do you tell me?" cried she, bursting into tears; "you surely cannot be so barbarous—my father is dying;—have a little pity. It is indeed dreadful to be here, to be among such people;—but what will become of my parent if you send us away? I have no more money to give you, but perhaps——" Here she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed so violently that her whole frame trembled.

Manuel began to pace about the cabin; I saw that he was affected, and therefore did not venture to speak. "Well, lady," said he, after a pause, "you may remain here. I will protect you and your father—yes, even though I should bring my-

self into difficulty by doing so." He then went upon deck and ordered the Captain and his crew, who had already seated themselves in the boat, to row away. The dashing of their oars, which at first broke upon the stillness of the night, gradually became fainter, and soon subsided into almost undistinguishable murmurs.

In the course of the evening Manuel asked me if I thought Mr R—— would recover from his wound. I told him that I feared he would soon be relieved from the inconvenience of having such a passenger on board. "So I suspect," returned he; "but what is to become of his daughter and the Mulatto woman? I wish I had sent them off in the boat to-night."—"It would have been unmerciful," said I; "perhaps the seamen themselves may perish."—"Don't fear; don't fear," cried he; "I treated them very generously. Most pirates would have left the whole party to drown in the brig, and been glad of such an opportunity of getting them out of the way. I gave them a good boat and plenty of provisions; they will easily reach Matanzas. My crew are enraged at my conduct in this affair. I must be on my guard; and, listen to me, be you also on yours!"

A short time before midnight Mr R—— complained of the oppressive closeness of the cabin, and begged to be lifted upon deck. We immediately complied with his wishes, and spread a mattress for him near the stern of the vessel. Elizabeth,

his daughter, seated herself beside his couch, and the Mulatto woman waited behind. I threw myself upon a *ceroon* at a little distance, and felt so fatigued that I gradually began to slumber, although within hearing of the sick man's feeble groans and hurried inspirations.

I was suddenly awakened by the sound of light footsteps. I opened my eyes, and saw Elizabeth. "My father is——" She could say no more. I rose and followed her. Mr R—— lay upon his back with half-closed eyes, and seemed scarcely sensible of our approach; but in a little time he turned his face towards me, and tried to smile. He then took hold of his daughter's hand, and attempted to greet her in the same way, but it was impossible; his lips trembled, and some tears rushed down his cheeks. None of us uttered a word, or even ventured to sigh.

It was the finest moonlight, and the whole heavens were covered with one continuous expanse of dappled white clouds. The celestial network, extending from horizon to horizon, floated in motionless repose, and the stars could be seen twinkling faintly through its opertures. The calm was such that our sails scarcely even flapped upon the masts, and our vessel lay as still as if she had been imbedded in a field of crystal. The balmy murmurings of the little surges upon the distant beach swelled upon the ear, and died away again, with a caprice that seemed in unison with the irregular

motions of a tall cocoa-nut tree, which stood alone upon a projecting rock, and was waved in a melancholy manner by a land-breeze too feeble and unsteady to reach or affect us.

Elizabeth knelt silently beside her father, with clasped hands, and had that frozen look of condensed despair, which is almost too terrible for an inhabitant of this world. Her face and lips were colourless, and she seemed like a spirit waiting for a departing soul. None of us knew the exact moment at which Mr R—— died. I soon after took his daughter by the hand, and conducted her to the cabin. She neither spoke a word nor made the least resistance, and I began to fear that grief had bewildered her perceptions. Her attendant followed us, and I left them together.

I did not attempt to sleep any that night. I was occupied in thinking of Elizabeth, who had soon awakened to a full sense of her misery, and whose sobs haunted my ears wherever I went. In the morning she sank into a gentle slumber, which, after continuing two hours, left her in a state of comparative rationality and composure. I requested to see her, and we had an interview. I offered myself as a protector, and promised to do everything in my power to extricate her from her present unhappy situation, and said I would escort her to a place of safety whenever I had the good fortune to effect this. I then told who I was, and related the circumstances that had induced me to

seek an asylum among the pirates. In return, she thanked me for my unremitting attentions to her father, and declared that she fully believed me to be what I professed.

The calm continued during the whole of that day, and Manuel exhibited many signs of impatience at its long duration; and the more so, as the current was gradually carrying us towards Matanzas, a place which he wished anxiously to avoid. Next morning a gentle breeze sprung up, and we had scarcely begun to profit by it, when we discovered a small brig of war, with American colours, bearing towards us under full sail. Manuel ordered his men to crowd all canvass, and tried various nautical manœuvres in the hope of escaping her; but she gained upon us every moment.

The negroes, when they perceived that we could not get out of her reach, were thrown into a state of consternation, and totally neglected their duty. They assembled together in groups, and conversed with outrageous looks and violent gesticulations, occasionally throwing baleful glances at Manuel. He saw that a storm was gathering, and immediately went below, and secured the door of the apartment which contained the arms. He then appeared upon deck, with a brace of pistols in his girdle, a dagger by his side, and a naked scimitar in his hand, and took his station beside the companion door.

The boldness of his deportment seemed to increase the fury of the blacks; some of whom called out,

"Down with him! down with him! he has betrayed us." Manuel paid no attention to their cries, but ordered them, in a voice of thunder, to load the guns, and rushed forward, waving his sword in the air. They became intimidated, and hastened to obey him; and while they were engaged in doing so, I ran down to the cabin, and armed myself as well as possible, at the same time comforting Elizabeth, and bidding her remain in her state-room.

When I went upon deck again I found that the negroes had openly mutinied. They were ranged round the foremast, and stood glaring at Manuel, and at each other, like a set of demons. "Hell curse you, captain!" cried one of them, "what right had you to bring us here? Were we all to be sent to the devil, that you might put ashore them damned whites that you picked out of the brig?"—"Ay, ay, it was mercy that made him do so," said another; "but see if we'll get any mercy from the tyrants that are in chase of us. Ha, Mr Manuel! I would almost be hanged myself to have the satisfaction of seeing you swing by the throat!"—"They couldn't get him hanged," vociferated a third, "for he would always untie the rope with his right hand. Oh, captain, may the devil scorch your soul for bringing us here!"—"He thinks us a set of *nigger* slaves," cried the first speaker, "who haven't spirit to do anything but what he bids us—but we'll show him another story. Come on; let us have revenge! Down with him and his companion!"

Several of the crew now rushed towards us with threatening gestures. Manuel fired a pistol among them, and wounded one with his scimitar, and I struck down another with the butt-end of a blunderbuss, and then acted upon the defensive. They were repelled; but would apparently have made a second attack, had not a shot from the brig raked us fore and aft, and carried away the binnacle. "Now, now!" shouted Manuel, "if you are worth anything, fight for your lives! The enemy is close upon us; we shall be blown out of the water! Here is the key of the armoury—go and equip yourselves, and show some real spirit."

The negroes were almost instantaneously animated by a new feeling. Some provided themselves with muskets and cutlasses, and others took their station at the guns. They all had a look of savage and determined resistance; which showed that they would rather perish in battle, than run the risk of terminating their lives upon a scaffold.

The brig had now come nearly alongside of us, and her captain commanded us to heave-to, if we desired any quarter. He was answered by the discharge of four cannon, and by a shower of musket-balls. They gave a broadside in return, which carried away our mainmast, and then bore down upon the schooner, with the intention of boarding her. The smoke prevented the helmsman of the brig from steering justly, and he suddenly brought her so close to us that she swept away our chains,

and stove in our bulwarks, and dragged us through the water for a considerable distance. The fight now became very desperate. The bayonet and cutlass had usurped the place of firearms, and the negroes, who were not provided with weapons of any kind, attacked the American seamen with their fists, beating them down, attempting to choke them, and pushing them overboard. They all the while animated each other with shouts, execrations, and blasphemous cries, and rushed furiously to the combat, half-naked, and covered with dust, and sweat, and blood.

I kept as near Manuel as possible. He sometimes fought vigorously for a few moments, and then stood idle, apparently irresolute what to do. At last he cried out, "It is easy to see how this day will end, but I must hasten its termination," and then hurried down to the cabin. I instinctively followed him, and found Elizabeth and her maid nearly speechless with terror. Manuel tore open the hatch in the floor, and pulled up a small cask, the head of which he knocked in with his hand. It was full of gunpowder. He placed it upon the table. I grew breathless. He put a steel between his teeth, and then seizing a flint, began to strike the one against the other. The pulsations of my heart ceased, and my eyes became dim. Manuel seemed suddenly to dilate into fearful and gigantic size, and to pour torrents of fire upon the gunpowder. My senses were suddenly recalled by a

loud crash, and by the appearance of water rushing down upon us through the skylight. I thought we were going to the bottom, and started up and pulled the fainting Elizabeth towards the gangway. There we encountered an American officer; he gave us a look of astonishment, and hastening towards Manuel, seized his arm, and said, "Surrender yourself—you are my prisoner."

Manuel did not attempt any resistance, but followed the officer upon deck. Having left Elizabeth, whose recollection was now pretty well restored, with her maid, I went there also. Everything had become quiet. The American seamen were in possession of the schooner, and the negroes had been removed on board the brig of war. Her captain ordered Manuel to be put in irons, and directed that Elizabeth and I should have accommodations in his own vessel.

I was a good deal astonished to meet with several of the crew that had belonged to the brig we had plundered, and to hear them say that they were the means of capturing the schooner. Having been fortunate enough to reach Matanzas the day after Manuel had set them adrift in the boat, they found an American brig of war there, which had run into the harbour that she might repair some damage she had sustained while on her voyage from Jamaica to Charleston. They immediately gave her captain information respecting the pirate, and he set out in pursuit of them, making the seamen warp his brig

along, till a breeze sprang up which enabled him to come in sight of the schooner. During the battle, a young officer who boarded her along with the American crew, happened to observe Manuel's attempts to blow them up, and with great presence of mind, dashed his foot through the sky-light, and averted the danger, by pouring down a large quantity of water upon the gunpowder.

A few hours after the capture of the schooner, we set sail for Charleston, where the brig was bound. We reached that port in ten days. The pirate crew were immediately lodged in jail. I underwent an examination, and was then taken into custody, it being evident, from my own confession, that I had not been forced on board the schooner. Elizabeth, to whom I had hourly become more devoted during the voyage, found an asylum in the house of a distant relation, who resided in Charleston, and was summoned as a witness against the negroes. In three weeks their trial came on, and Manuel and seven others were condemned to death. No evidence having appeared against me, I was liberated from confinement at an early period, by the intercession of several persons who appeared to take an interest in my fate. I supplied myself with means of support, by disposing of some valuables I had in my possession.

I was filled with sorrow when I heard that Manuel was condemned to death, aware that he deserved a better fate. I visited him in jail, the day after he had

received his sentence. He was loaded with fetters, and occupied a small cell by himself, through which he paced as quickly as the weight of his irons would permit; though he had a subdued look, the expression of his countenance was neither abject nor sorrowful.

"Ah, is it you, sir?" cried he, advancing towards me, as I entered; "you are the person I most wished to see. How kind it is in you to visit a poor negro! For I am no more now. I am glad to be treated as a rational creature by at least one white man. I wonder they have let you escape. In this country it is a crime for a man to have anything to do with blacks, except in the way of flogging them."—"You do not deserve to die," said I, after a pause.—"Oh, perhaps not," returned he; "but law — law — law, you know — however, 'tis better I should. I had a weary life of it. I was chased from the land, and took refuge upon the sea; but, notwithstanding that, I could not escape the blood-hounds of the Southern States of America. But here I have written out something for you. Take this letter to Gustavus H——, and accept what he gives you in return, as a remembrance of me. But don't tell him that I'm sentenced to death." He then presented me with a paper, and having given directions where I should find the person to whom it was addressed, bid me farewell.

I immediately proceeded in search of Manuel's acquaintance, and after some time reached his house, which was situated in the most obscure part

of a narrow and dirty alley. The door was opened by an old negro, and I inquired if Gustavus H—— lived there. "I am the man," returned he; "walk in, master." I entered, and gave him the letter, and at his request seated myself upon an old stool in one corner of the apartment until he read it. "Strange, very strange," muttered he, gazing on me intently. "How is Mr Manuel?"—"Well enough at present," returned I; "but——." He stood still a moment, as if waiting the conclusion of my reply, and then went out of the room, but soon came back, carrying a bag, which he immediately put into my hands. Its weight was immense. "That's all," said he, "I guess Manuel don't intend that I should be his *bankeer* long. Good morning, sir."

When I returned to my lodgings, I opened the bag, and, to my astonishment, found it full of doubloons. I could not believe that Manuel intended leaving me such a legacy, and went to the prison in the afternoon, that I might see him, and converse with him upon the subject; but I arrived there too late; he had anticipated the law by putting a period to his existence.

Fortune had now bestowed upon me the means of returning to my native country. I communicated this to Elizabeth, and entreated that we might make the journey of life together. She consented, and our mutual happiness was soon as great as our individual misery had been, when fate first brought us together.

THE PANDOUR AND HIS PRINCESS.

A HUNGARIAN SKETCH.

[*MAGA.* JULY 1832.]

"WHAT is the day's news? Tell me something, my dear Colonel, for I am dying of *ennui*," said the showy Prince Charles of Buntzlau, one of the handsomest men about the court, and incomparably the greatest coxcomb.

"Not much more than yesterday," was the answer of Colonel the Baron von Herbert. "The world goes on pretty much the same as ever. We have an Emperor, five Electors, and fifty sovereign princes, in Presburg; men eat, drink, and sleep notwithstanding; and, until there is some change in these points, one day will not differ much from another to the end of the world."

"My dear Colonel," said the Prince, smoothing down the blackest and longest pair of mustaches in the imperial cuirassiers, "you seem to think little of *us*, the blood, the *couronnés*, the salt of the earth, who preserve Germany from being as vulgar as

Holland. But I forget; you have a partiality for the *gens du peuple*."

"Pardon me, Prince," said Herbert, with a smile, "I pity them infinitely, and wish that they might exchange with the Landgraves and Margraves, with all my heart. I have no doubt that the change would often be advantageous to both, for I have seen many a prince of the empire who would make a capital ploughman, while he made but a very clumsy prince; and I have, at this moment, three prodigiously high personages commanding three troops in my regiment, whom nature palpably intended to clean their own horses' heels, and who, I charitably believe, might, by dint of drilling and half-a-dozen years' practice, make three decent dragoons."

"Just as you please, Colonel," said the Prince, "but beware of letting your private opinion go forth. Leopold is one of the new light, I allow, and loves a philosopher; but he is an Emperor still, and expects all his philosophers to be of his own opinion.—But here comes Collini."

Collini was his Italian valet, who came to inform his Highness, that it was time for him to pay his respects to the Princess of Marosin. This Italian's principal office was, to serve his master in place of a memory—to recognise his acquaintance for him as he drove through the streets—and to tell him when to see and when to be blind. The Prince

looked at his diamond watch, started from the sofa, gave himself a congratulatory glance in a mirror, and, turning to Collini, asked, "When am I to be married to the Princess?"

"Poh, Prince," interrupted the Colonel, with something of disdain, "this is too absurd. Send this grimacing fellow about his business, and make love on your own account, if you will; or if not, choose some woman whose beauty and virtue, or whose want of them both, will not be dishonoured by such trifling."

"You then actually think *her* worth the attentions of a Prince of the Empire?" said the handsome coxcomb, as, with one finger curling his mustaches, he again, and more deliberately, surveyed himself in the mirror.

"I think the Princess of Marosin worthy of the attentions of any King on earth," said the Baron, emphatically; "she is worthy of a throne, if beauty, intelligence, and dignity of mind, can make her worthy of one."

The Prince stared. "My dear Colonel!" he exclaimed, "may I half presume you have been speculating on the lady yourself? But I can assure you it is in vain. The Princess is a woman; and allowing, as I do,"—and this he said with a Parisian bow, that bow which is the very language of superiority,—"the infinite pre-eminence of the Baron von Herbert in everything, the circumstance of her

being a woman, and my being a Prince, is prodigiously in my favour."

The Baron had involuntarily laid his hand upon his sword at the commencement of this speech, but the conclusion disarmed him. He had no right to quarrel with any man for his own good opinion, and he amused himself by contemplating the Prince, who continued arranging his mustaches. The sound of a trumpet put an end to the conference.

"Well, Prince, the trumpet sounds for parade," said the Baron, "and I have not time to discuss so extensive a subject as your perfections. But take my parting information with you. I am not in love with the lady, nor the lady with me; her one-and-twenty, and my one-and-fifty, are sufficient reasons on both sides. You are not in love with the lady neither, and—I beg of you to hear the news like a hero—the lady is *not* in love with you; for the plain reason, that so showy a figure cannot possibly be in love with anything but itself; and the Princess is, I will venture to say, too proud to share a heart with a bottle of lavender water, a looking-glass, and a poodle."

The Prince raised his eyebrows, but Von Herbert proceeded. "Buntzlau will be without a female sovereign, and its very accomplished Prince will remain, to the last, the best dressed *bachelor* in Vienna. *Au revoir*, I see my Pandours on parade."

Von Herbert and the Prince parted with mutual

smiles. But the Prince's were of the sardonic order; and after another contemplation of his features, which seemed, unaccountably, to be determined to disappoint him for the day, he rang for Collini, examined a new packet of uniforms, bijouterie, and otto of roses, from Paris, and was closeted with him for two profound hours.

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A forest untouched since the flood overhung the road, and a half-ruined huge dwelling.

"Have the patrol passed?"

"Within the last five minutes."

"I wish them at the bottom of the river; they cost me a Turkish carabine, a brace of diamond watches, as I'll be sworn, from the showy fellow that I levelled at, with the valise behind his courier, scented enough to perfume a forest of brown bears."

"Hang those Hulans," was the answer. "Ever since the Emperor's arrival, they have done nothing but gallop about, putting honester men than themselves in fear of their lives, and cutting up our employment so woefully, that it is impossible to make money enough on the road to give a decent education to one's children. But here comes the captain. We shall now have some news. Speranski never makes his appearance unless something is in the wind."

This dialogue passed between two Transylvanian pedlars, if a judgment were to be formed from their blue caps, brown cloaks, and the packs strapped to

their shoulders. A narrower inspection might have discovered within those cloaks the little heads of a pair of short scimitars; their trousers would have displayed to the curious the profile of two horse-pistols, and their boots developed a pair of those large-bladed knives which the Hungarian robber uses, alike to slice away the trunks of the britchska, to cut the harness of the horse, the throat of the rider, and carve his own sheep's-milk cheese.

The captain came in, a tall, bold figure, in the dress of an innkeeper. He flung a purse upon the table, and ordered supper. The pedlars disburdened themselves of their boxes, kindled a fire on a hearth which seemed guiltless of having administered to the wants of mankind for many a wild year; produced from an unsuspected storehouse under the floor some dried venison, and the paws of a bear, preserved in the most luxurious style of Hungarian cookery; decorated their table even with some pieces of plate, which, though evidently of different fashions, gave proof of their having been under noble roofs, by their armorial bearings and workmanship, though the rest of their history did not lie altogether so much in high life; and in a few minutes the captain, throwing off his innkeeper hat and drab-coloured coat, half sat, half lay down, to a supper worthy of an Emperor, or of a man who generally sups much better—an imperial commissary.

The whole party were forest robbers; the thing must be confessed. But the spirit of the country prevailed even under the rotting roof of "the Ghost's house,"—the ominous name which this old and ruinous, though still stately mansion, had earned among the peasantry. The name did not exactly express the fact; for, when tenanted at all, it was tenanted by anything rather than ghosts; by some dozens of rough, raw-boned, bold, and hard-living fellows—as solid specimens of flesh and blood as had ever sent a shot right in front of the four horses of a courier's cabriolet, or had brought to a full stop, scimitar in hand, the heyducs and chasseurs, the shivering valets and frightened postilions of a court chamberlain, whirling along the Vienna road with six to his britchska.

Etiquette was preserved at this supper. The inferior plunderers waited on the superior. Captain Speranski ate his meal alone, and in solemn silence. The pedlars watched his nod; filled out the successive goblets at a glance, and having performed their office, watched, at a respectful distance, the will of the man of authority. A silver chime announced the hour of ten. One of the pedlars drew aside a fragment of a ragged shawl, which covered one of the most superb *pendules* of the Palais Royal.

If the Apollo who sat harping in gold upon its stytolate, could have given words to his melodies, he might have told a curious narrative; for he had

already seen a good deal of the various world of adventure. Since his first transit from the magnificent Horlogerie of M. Sismonde, of all earthly watchmakers the most renowned, this Apollo had first sung to the world and his sister muses in the chamber of the unlucky Prince de Soubise. The fates of France had next transferred him, with the Prince's camp-plate, despatches, secret orders, and military chest, into the hands of a regiment of Prussian hussars, at the memorable battle of Rosbach, that modern "battle of the Spurs." But the Prussian colonel was either too much or too little a lover of the arts, to keep Apollo and the Nine all to himself; and the *pendule* next rang its silver notes over the roulette-table of the most brilliant of Parisian opera-dancers, transferred from the *salle* of the *Academie* to the Grand Comedie at Berlin. But roulette, wheel of Plutus as it is, is sometimes the wheel of fortune; and the fair La Pirouette, in spite of the patronage of the court and the nation, found that she must, like generals and monarchs, submit to fate, and part with her brilliant superfluities. The pendule fled from her Parian mantel-piece, and its chimes were thenceforth to awake the eyelids of the handsomest woman in Hungary, the Countess Lublin née Joblonsky, memorable for her beauty, her skill at *loto*, and the greatest profusion of rouge since the days of Philip Augustus. Its history now drew to a close. It had scarcely excited the envy

of all the countesses of her circle, and, of course, became invaluable to the fair Joblonsky, when it disappeared. A reward of ten times its value was instantly offered. The Princess of Marosin, the arbiter of all elegance, who had once expressed her admiration of its taste, was heard to regret its loss as a specimen of foreign art. The undone proprietor was only still more undone; for of all beauties living or dead, she most hated the Princess, blooming, youthful, and worshipped as she was, to the infinite detriment of all the fading Joblonskys of the creation. But no reward could bring it back. This one source of triumph was irrecoverably gone; and from Presburg to Vienna, all was conjecture, conversation, and consternation. So ended the court history of the *pendule*.

When the repast was fully over, Speranski, pouring out a glass of Tokay from a bottle which bore the impress of the Black Eagle of the House of Hapsburg, and which had evidently been arrested on its road to the Emperor's table, ordered one of the pedlars to give him the papers, "which," said he, with a smile, "that Turkish courier *mislaid* where he slept last night." A small packet was handed to him;—he perused it over and over with a vigilant eye, but it was obvious, without any of the results which he expected; for, after a few minutes' pause, during which he examined every part of the case in which they were enclosed, he

threw the letters aside. "What," said he, in a disappointed tone, "was to be expected from those opium-eaters? Yet they are shrewd in their generation, and the scandals of the harem, the propitious day for shaving the Sultan's head, the lucky star for combing his illustrious beard, or the price of a dagger-hilt, are as good topics as any that pass in our own diplomacy. Here, Sturnwold, put back this circumcised nonsense into its case, and send it, do you hear, by one of our *own* couriers, to the Turkish secretary at Vienna; let it be thrown on his pillow, or tied to his turban, just as you please; but, at all events, we must not do the business like a clumsy cabinet messenger. Now, begone; and you, Heinrich, hand me the Turk's meerschaum."

The bandit brought him a very handsome pipe, which he said would probably be more suited to the Turk's tobacco, of which he had deposited a box upon the table. Speranski took the pipe, but, at his first experiment, he found the neck obstructed. His quick conception ascertained the point at once. Cutting the wood across, he found a long roll of paper within. He glanced over its contents, instantly sprang up, ordered the attendance of half a dozen of "his friends" on horseback, looked to the priming of his pistols, and gallopped off through the forest.

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On the evening of one of the most sultry days of

July, and in one of the most delicious yet most lonely spots of the Carpathian hills, a trampling of hoofs, and a jingling of horse-furniture, and a confusion of loud and dissonant voices, announced that strangers were at hand. The sounds told true, for, gradually emerging from the glade covered with terebinth trees, wild vines that hung their rich and impenetrable folds over elms, hazels, and cypress, like draperies of green and brown silk over the pillars of some Oriental palace, came a long train of sumpter mules, led horses, and Albanian grooms; next came a more formidable group of horsemen, the body-guards of the Hospodar of Moldavia, sent to escort Mohammed Ali Hunkiar, the Moslem ambassador, through the Bannat; and then came, seated on the Persian charger given to him from the stables of the Padishah, the brother of the Sun and father of the Moon, Sultan Selim, the most mighty—a little bitter-visaged old Turk, with the crafty countenance of the hereditary hunchbacks of the great city of the faithful. Nothing could be more luxurious than the hour, the golden sunset; nothing lovelier than its light streaming in a thousand rays, shifts and shapes of inimitable lustre through the blooms and foliage of the huge ravine; and nothing less lovely or more luxurious than the little old ambassador, who had earned his elevation from a cobbler's stall to the Divan, by his skill in cutting off heads, and had now earned his appoint-

ment to the imperial embassy, by his dexterity in applying a purse of ten thousand sequins to the conscience of the slipper-bearer to the slipper-bearer of his highness the Vizier.

Nothing could seem less inclined to look at the dark side of things at this moment, or to throw away the enjoyments of this world for the good of Moslem diplomacy, than Mohammed Ali Hunkiar, as he sat and smoked, and stroked his long beard, and inhaled the mingled fumes of his Smyrna pipe, and the air aromatic with a host of flowers. But the Turkish proverb, "The smoker is often blinded by his own smoke," was to find its verification even in the diplomatic hunchback. As he had just reached the highest stone of the pass, and was looking with the triumph of avarice—or ambition, if it be the nobler name—down the valley checkered with the troop that meandered through paths as devious and as many-coloured as an Indian snake, a shot struck his charger in the forehead; the animal sprang high in the air, fell, and flung the ambassador at once from his seat, his luxury, and a certain dream of clearing ten times the ten thousand sequins which he had disbursed for his place, by a genuine Turkish business of the dagger, before he left the portcullis of Presburg.

All was instant confusion. The shots began to fall thick, though the enemy might have been the beasts of the earth or the fowls of the air, for any

evidence that sight could give to the contrary. The whole troop were of one opinion, that they must have fallen into the power of the fiend himself; for the shots poured on them from every quarter at once. Wherever they turned, they were met by a volley. The cavalry of the Hospodar, though brave as panthers on parade, yet were not used to waste their valour or their time on struggles of this irregular nature. They had bought their own places, and paid the due purchase of a well-fed sinecure; they had bought their own clothes, and felt answerable to themselves for keeping them in preservation worthy of a court; they had bought their own horses, and, like true Greeks, considered that the best return their horses could make was to carry them as safe out of the field as into it. The consequence was, that in the next five minutes the whole escort was seen riding at will in whatever direction the destiny that watches over the guards of sovereign princes might point the safest way. The ravine, the hill, the forest, the river, were all speckled with turbans, like flowers, in full gallop; the muleteers, being of slower movement, took the simpler precaution of turning their mules, baggage and all, up the retired corners of the forest, from which they emerged only to turn them with their lading to their several homes. All was the most picturesque mêlée for the first half-dozen rounds, all was the most picturesque flight for the next.

All was silence thenceforth; broken only by the shot that came dropping through the thickets wherever a lurking turban suddenly seemed to recover its energies, and fly off at full speed. At length even the shots ceased, and all was still and lone. The forest looked as if it had been unshaken since the deluge; the ravine—calm, rich, and tufted with thicket, shrub, and tree—looked as if it had never heard the hoof of cavalry. The wood-dove came out again, rubbed down its plumage, and cooed in peace to the setting sun; the setting-sun threw a long radiance, that looked like a pyramid of amber, up the pass. Turban, Turk, skirmish, and clamour, all were gone. One remnant of the time alone remained.

Under a huge cypress, that covered the ground with its draperies, like a funeral pall, lay a charger, and under it a green and scarlet bale. The bale had once been a man, and that man the Turkish ambassador. But his embassy was over. He had made his last salaam, he had gained his last sequin, he had played his last trick, he had told his last lie. "Dust to dust" was now the history of Mohammed Ali Hunkiar.

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The Hall of the Diet at Presburg is one of the wonders of the capital. The heroes and magnates of Upper Hungary frown in immeasurable magnitude of mustache and majestic longitude of beard

on its walls. The conquerors of the Bannat, the ravagers of Transylvania, the *potentissimi* of Sclavonia, there gleam in solidity of armour, that at once gives a prodigious idea of both their strength and their terrors. The famous rivers, figured by all the variety of barbarian genius, pour their pictured torrents over the ceiling. The Draave embraces the Saave, the Grau rushes in fluid glory through the Keisse; and floods that disdain a bridge, and flow a hundred leagues asunder, there interlace each other in streams as smiling and affectionate as if they slept in the same fountain. Entering that hall, every true Hungarian lifts up his hands, and rejoices that he is born in the country of the arts, and, leaving it, compassionates the fallen honours of Florence and Rome.

Yet in that hall the Emperor Leopold, monarch of fifty provinces, and even sovereign of Hungary, was pacing backwards and forwards without casting a glance on the wonders of the Hungarian hand. Colonel the Baron von Herbert was at the end of the saloon, waiting the Imperial pleasure. The dialogue, which was renewed and broken off as the Emperor approached or left him, was, of course, one of fragments. The Emperor was in obvious agitation. "It is the most unaccountable thing that I ever heard of," said Leopold. "He had, I understand, a strong escort; his own train were numerous; the roads regularly patroled; every precau-

tion taken; and yet the thing is done in full sunshine. A man is murdered almost under my own eyes, travelling with my passport; an ambassador, and above all ambassadors, a Turk."

"But your Majesty," said Von Herbert, "is not now in Vienna. Your Hungarian subjects have peculiar ideas on the subject of human justice; and they would as soon shoot an ambassador, if the idea struck them, as a squirrel."

"But a Turk," said the Emperor, "against whom there could not have existed a shadow of personal pique; who could have roused no jealousy at court; who could have been known, in fact, by nobody here; to be killed almost within sight of the city gates, and every paper that he had upon him, every present, every jewel, everything carried off, without the slightest clue to discovery! Baron, I shall begin to doubt the activity of your Pandours."

The Baron's grave countenance flushed at the remark, and he answered with more than even his usual gravity. "Your Majesty must decide. But, whoever has been in fault, allow me to vindicate my regiment. The Pandour patrol were on the spot on the first alarm; but the whole affair was so quickly over, that all their activity was utterly useless. It actually seemed supernatural."

"Has the ground been examined?" asked Leopold.

"Every thicket," answered Von Herbert. "I

would stake my troopers, for sagacity and perseverance, against so many bloodhounds; and yet, I must acknowledge to your Majesty that, except for the marks of the horse's hoofs on the ground, the bullets sticking in the trees, and the body of the Turk himself, which had been stripped of every valuable, we might have thought that we had mistaken the place altogether."

"The whole business," said Leopold, "is a mystery; and it must be unravelled." He then broke off, resumed his walk to the end of the hall; then returning, said abruptly—"Look to the affair, Colonel. The Turks have no good opinion of us as it is, and they will now have a fresh pretext, in charging us with the assassination of their ambassador. Go, send out your Pandours, offer a hundred ducats for the first man who brings any information of the murder; offer a thousand, if you please, for the murderer himself. Even the crown would not be safe if these things were to be done with impunity. Look to your Pandours more carefully in future."

The Baron, with a vexation which he could not suppress, hastily replied—"Your Majesty does not attribute this outrage to any of my corps?"

"Certainly not to the Baron von Herbert," said the Emperor, with a reconciling smile. "But, my dear Baron, your heroes of the Bannat have no love for a Turk, while they have a very considerable love for his plunder. For an embroidered saddle or a

diamond-hilted dagger, they would go as far as most men. In short, you must give those bold barbarians of yours employment, and let their first be to find out the assassin."

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It was afternoon, and the Wiener Straat was crowded with equipages of the great and fair. The place of this brilliant reunion was the drawing-room of the Princess of Marosin, and the occasion was the celebration of her birthday. Princesses have so many advantages over humbler beauties that they must submit to one calamity, which, in the estimation of many a beauty, is more than a balance for all the gifts of fortune. They must acknowledge their age. The art of printing, combined with the scrutiny of etiquette, prohibits all power of making the years of a princess a secret confided to the bosoms of the privy council. As the hour of her first unclosing the brilliancy of her eyes, in a world which all the court poets profess must be left in darkness without them, so the regular periods by which the bud advances to the bloom, and the bloom matures into ripened loveliness, are registered with an annual activity of verse, prose, and prostration, that precludes all chronological error. Even at the period when the autumnal touch begins to tinge the cheek, and the fair possessor of so much homage would willingly forget the exact number of the years during which she has borne the sceptre,

the calculation is continued with fatal accuracy. Not an hour can be silently subducted from the long arrear of Time; and while, with all the female world beneath her, he suddenly seems to stand still, or even to retrograde, with the unhappy object of regal reckoning he moves mercilessly onward, with full expanded wing carries her from climacteric to climacteric, unrestrained and irrestrainable by all the skill of female oblivion, defies the antagonist dexterity of the toilet, makes coiffeur and cosmetics null and void, and fixes the reluctant and lovely victim of the calendar in the awful elevation of "the world gone by." She is a calendar saint, and, like most of that high sisterhood, has purchased her dignity by martyrdom.

But the Princess of Marosin had no reason to dread the keenest reckoning of rivalry. She was on that day eighteen. Eighteen years before that morning the guns from the grey and war-worn towers of Marosin had announced, through a circuit of one of the loveliest principalities of Upper Hungary, that one of the loveliest beings that even Hungary had ever seen was come from its original skies, or from whatever part of creation handsome princesses visit this sublunar world. As the only descendant of her illustrious house, she was the ward of the Emperor, but having the still nearer claims of blood, her marriage now occupied the Imperial care. A crowd of Marshals and Mar-

graves felt that they would make excellent guardians of the Principality, and offered their generous protection. The lady seemed indifferent to the choice; but Prince Charles of Buntzlau, by all acknowledgment the best dressed Prince in the Empire, at the head of the hussar guard of the Emperor, incalculably rich, and incomparably self-satisfied, had already made up his own mind on the subject, and decided that the Principality, and the lady annexed, were to be his. The Emperor, too, had given his sanction. Prince Charles was not the man whom Leopold would have chosen for the President of the Aulic Council, though his claims as a master of the ceremonies were beyond all discussion. But the Imperial policy was not reconcilable with the idea of suffering this important inheritance to fall into the hands of a Hungarian noble. Hungary, always turbulent, requires coercives, not stimulants; and two hundred thousand ducats a-year, in the hands of one of her dashing captains, would have been sufficient to make another Tekeli. The handsome Prince was evidently not shaped for raising the banner of revolt, or heading the cavaliers of the Ukraine. He was an Austrian in all points, and a new pelisse would have won him from the car of Alexander on the day of his entry into Babylon.

Among the faithful of the empire the Sovereign's nod is politics, religion, and law. The Marshals and

Margraves instinctively bowed before the supremacy of the superhuman thing that wore the crown of Charlemagne, and Prince Charles's claim was worshipped by the whole embroidered circle as one of the decisions which it would be court impiety to question, as it was court destiny to fulfil.

Hungary was once the land of kings, and it was still the land of nobles. Half oriental, half western, the Hungarian is next in magnificence to the Moslem. He gives his last ducat for a shawl, a jewel-hilted sabre, or a gilded cap, which nothing but his fear of being mistaken for a Turk prevents him from turning into a turban. The Princess Juliana of Marosin sat in the centre of a chamber that might have made the cabinet of the favourite Sultana of the Lord of the Infidels. She sat on a low sofa covered with tapestry from Smyrna; her caftan, girdled with the largest emeralds, was made by the fair fingers of the Greek maidens of Saloniki; her hair, long, black, and drooping round her person, in rich sable wreaths, like the branches of a cypress, was surmounted by a crescent which had won many an eye in the jewel mart of Constantinople; and in her hand she waved a fan of peacocks' plumes, made by the principal artist to the serail of Teheran. Thus Oriental in her drapery, colours, and costume, she sat in the centre of a chamber, which, for its gloomy carvings, yet singular stateliness of decoration, might have reminded the spectator of some

Indian shrine, or subterranean dungeon of the dark spirits enclosing a spirit of light; or, to abandon poetry, and tell the truth in plain speech, the chamber reminded the spectator of the formal, yet lavish splendour of the old kingly times of the land, while its possessor compelled him to feel the fact, that all magnificence is forgotten in the presence of a beautiful woman.

The Princess received the homage of the glittering circle with the complacency of conscious rank, and repaid every bow with one of those sweet smiles, which to a courtier are irresistible evidences of his personal merit; to a lover, are spells that raise him from the lowest depths to the most rapturous altitudes; and to a woman, cost nothing whatever. But, to an eye which none of these smiles had deprived of all its powers of reading the human countenance, there was in even this creature of birth, beauty, and admiration, some secret anxiety, which, in despite of all conjecture, proved that she was no more than mortal. There was a wavering of her colour, that bespoke inward perturbation; a paleness followed by a flush that threw the crimson of her gorgeous shawl into the shade; a restless movement of the fingers loaded with gems; a quick turn of the head towards the door, though the most potential flattery was at the moment pouring into the ear at the opposite side. There were times, when a slight expression of scorn

upon her fine features escaped her politeness, and gave sign that she agreed with mankind of all ages, in the infinite monotony, dulness, and commonplace of the *élite* of the earth, the starred and ribboned society of the high places of mankind. But all was peace to the emotion of her features, when the door slowly opened; and after a note of preparation worthy of the arrival of the Great Mogul, the chamberlain announced, "Prince Charles of Buntzlau." Pride and resentment flashed across her physiognomy, like lightning across the serenity of a summer sky. Her cheek grew crimson, as the gallant lover, the affianced husband, came bowing up to her; her brow contracted, and the man would have been wise who had augured from that brow the hazard of taking her hand without first securing her heart. But all was soon over; the lovely lady soon restrained her emotion, with a power which showed her presence of mind. But her cheek would not obey even her determination, it continued alternately glowing and pale; wild thoughts were colouring and blanching that cheek; and the fever of the soul was burning in her restless and dazzling eye. On the birthdays of the great in Hungary, it is the custom that none shall come empty-handed. A brilliant variety of presents already filled the tables and sofas of the apartment. But the Prince's present eclipsed them all; it was a watch from the Horlogerie of the most famous

artist of Paris, and a *chef-d'œuvre* in point of setting. The Princess looked at it with a disdain which it cost her an effort to conceal. "Prince," said she, "I regret the want of patriotism which sends our nobles to purchase the works of strangers, instead of encouraging the talents of our own country."—"Yes, but your Highness may condescend to reflect," said the lover, "on the utter impossibility of finding anything of this kind tolerable except in Paris." The Princess turned to one of the Bohemians who formed her band of minstrels, and said, "Vladimir, desire the jewel-keeper to bring my Hungarian watch." The Bohemian went on his mission—the jewel-keeper appeared with the watch, and it was instantly declared, by the unanimous admiration of the circle, to be altogether unrivalled in the art. The Prince, chagrined at this discomfiture, asked, with more than the authority of a lover, if the Princess "would do him the honour to mention the artist so deserving of her patronage." She handed the watch over to him. He opened it, and a paper dropped out. On it was written the name of Mohammed Ali Hunkiar.

"The murdered ambassador!" instinctively exclaimed fifty voices.—The Princess rose from her seat, overwhelmed with surprise and alarm. "The Turkish ambassador!" said she; "then this must have been a part of his plunder." The jewel-keeper was summoned to give account of the cir-

cumstances connected with the purchase. His answer was, that "it was no purchase whatever." But he produced a note which he had received along with it. The note was "a request that her Highness would accept so trivial a present on her birthday, from one of her faithful subjects;" and that, unable to discover the name of the donor, he had accepted it accordingly. Her circle soon after broke up. In a court all things are known; in a province all things known or unknown are an invaluable topic as long as they are new. The story of the Hungarian watch was turned into shapes innumerable. But the result of the investigation which immediately took place, by order of the Princess, was, that it had actually been made by an artist of Buda for the Sultan, by whom it was sent among the presents designed for the Emperor. On the fall of the Turk it had disappeared, like all the rest of his plunder, and had been unheard of until it started into light in the household of the Princess of Marosin.

The little perturbation excited by this incident lasted but till the high and mighty of the circle had withdrawn, to communicate the fact to a dozen other circles, and talk of it until the world was weary alike of the tale and the tellers. But there was a perturbation in the mind of this young and lovely being, which came from a deeper source, and lasted longer than even the delight of her dear five

hundred friends, in surmising all the possible modes in which the stately relative of Emperors had contrived to charm into her fair hands the most superb *montre* under the roofs of the city of Presburg.

Sunset began to shed its quiet gold on the hill-tops round the city—the sounds of day were fading fast—the glittering crowd had left her halls to silence—and as she walked through the suite of magnificent chambers in her gala dress, tissued with emeralds and rubies, and her regal loveliness contrasting with her eye fixed upon the ground, and her slow and meditative step, she might have been taken for the guardian genius of those halls of ancestry, or a new avator of the tragic muse. Arrived at the balcony, she almost fell into the flowery seat, below which spread a vast and various view of the most fertile plain of Hungary. But the vision on her eye was not of the harvest heavily swelling before her at every wave of the breeze. Her thoughts were of valleys, where the sun never reached their green depths; of forests, where the roebuck fed and sported in scorn of the hunter; of mountains, whose marble spines were covered only with clouds, and whose only echoes were those of the thunder or the eagle. All before her eye was beauty cultured, and calm pleasure. The peasantry were driving their wains homeward loaded with the luxuriance of the Hungarian fields, proverbially rich where they are cultivated at all.

Large droves of quiet cattle were speckling the distant pasture, and enjoying the heat and light of evening. The citizens were issuing from the city gates to taste the freshness of the hour, and troops of the nobles attendant on the imperial ceremony, relieved from the labours of etiquette and antechambers, were driving their glittering equipages through the avenues, or caracolling their Ukraine chargers through the meadows. Yet for the living landscape the young gazer had no eyes. The scene on which her spirit dwelt was one of savage majesty and lonely power. A vast pile of rocks, through which a way seemed to have been cloven by the thunderbolt, opened on a glen as desolate as if it had never been trodden by the foot of man. Yet, under the shelter of one of its overhanging cliffs, peeping out from a drapery of heath, lichens, and wild flowers, as rich as a Persian carpet, was seen the outline of a rude building, half cottage, half tower, and resting on the slope beside it, a hunter with his boar-spear fixed upright in the turf—a greyhound beside him, and his whole soul employed in listening to the roar of the Mediterranean, whose waters chafed and swelled at the entrance of the ravine, and spread to the horizon like a gigantic sheet of sanguined steel.

The murmur of the church bells for the evening service at length scattered the vision. The mountain forests vanished, the glen of eternal marble

was a garden embroidered with all the cultivation of art, and nothing was left of the whole proud picture but the star that now came, like a bride from her chamber, and stood showering radiance upon her head. That star, too, had gleamed upon the sky of the Croatian ravine, and in her enthusiasm she could almost have addressed it like a friend, or put up a prayer to its shrine as that of a beneficent divinity. In the strong sensibility of the moment she uttered a few broken aspirations to its brightness, and a wish that she might escape the infinite weariness of life, and, like that star, be a gazer on existence, from a height above the cares and clouds of this world. A sudden movement among the shrubs below caught her ear; she glanced down, and saw, with his countenance turned full on her, as if she were something more than human, the hunter whom her fancy had pictured in the glen!

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It was midnight, when twenty individuals, evidently of high rank, had assembled in an obscure house in one of the suburbs. But it was evident, from the plainness of their dress, that they had some object in concealing their rank; and from the weapons under their cloaks it was equally evident that they had come upon some business, in which either danger was to be guarded against, or violence intended.

For some time there was silence, the only words exchanged were in whispers. At intervals, a low knock at the door, a watchword, and a sign exchanged between the keeper of the entrance and the applicant without, announced a new comer. Still nothing was done; and as the cathedral bells tolled midnight, the anxiety for the arrival of some distinguished stranger, who had unaccountably delayed his coming, grew excessive. It gradually escaped, too, that the Cardinal di Lecco, the Papal Internuncio, was the expected individual.

The signal was given at last; the door opened, and a pale, decrepit Roman ecclesiastic entered. "Are all our friends here?" was his first question. But the answer was by no means a hospitable one. "By what means, Monsignore," said a tall dark-featured personage, advancing to him, "have we the honour of seeing *you* here? We are upon private business."—"I come by your own invitation," said the ecclesiastic mildly, producing at the same time a letter, which was handed round the circle. "But this letter is to the nuncio of his Holiness; and it was only from him that we desired an answer in person." Then, in a higher tone, and half drawing his sword, an action which was imitated by all, "We must know, reverend signor, who you are, and by what authority you have intruded yourself into this room, or you must prepare to receive the reward due to all spies and traitors." The vener-

able priest's countenance betrayed the most obvious alarm; surrounded by this conflux of indignant visages, and with twenty swords already flashing round his head, it required more than usual firmness to contemplate his situation without awe. The single glance which he cast to the door seemed to say how gladly he would have escaped from this specimen of Hungarian deliberation. His perturbation evidently deprived him of defence; he tried to explain the cause of his coming; he searched his dress for some paper, which, by his signs rather than his words, he intimated, would answer for his character. He searched his bosom, all was in vain; his hands became entangled; he made a sudden step to the door, but suspicion was now thoroughly roused. Every sword was flashing there against his bosom. He tottered back, uttered some indistinct sounds of terror, and fell fainting into a chair.

The question was now how to dispose of him, for that he was not the Cardinal was a matter of personal knowledge to Count Colvellino, the personage who had first addressed him.

The Count, a man of habitual ferocity, proposed that he should be stabbed on the spot—an opinion which met with universal assent; but the difficulty was, how to dispose of the body. To bury it where they were was impossible for men with no other instruments than their swords; to fling it into the river would inevitably betray the murder by day-

light; and even to convey it through the streets, to the river side, might be perilous, from the number of guards and loiterers brought together by the Imperial residence. During the deliberation the old ecclesiastic returned to his senses. By some accident his hand had fallen upon the secret packet which contained his credentials; the discovery acted on him as a cure for all his feebleness; and in his delivery of his mission he even wore an air of dignity. "The length and haste of my journey from Rome," said the venerable man, "may apologise, most noble lords, for my weakness; but this paper will, I presume, be satisfactory. It is, as you see, the rescript of his Holiness to the Cardinal di Lecco, whose servant and secretary stands before you. The Cardinal, suddenly occupied by the high concerns of the Secreta Concilia, of which he has just been appointed president, has sent me with his signet, his sign-manual, and his instructions, as contained in this cipher, to attend the high deliberations of my most honoured Lords, the Barons of Upper Hungary." The credentials were delivered. All were authentic. Colvellino sullenly acknowledged that he had been premature in condemning the Papal envoy, who now announced himself as the Father Jiacomo di Estrella, of the Friars Minors of the Capital; and the point at issue was directly entered upon. It was of a nature which justified all their caution. The Emperor Leopold was supposed to

have brought with him to the throne some ideas, hostile alike to the ancient feudalism of Hungary, and the supremacy of the Roman See. Revolution was threatening in Europe; and the Barons felt violent suspicions of a revolutionary inroad on their privileges, headed by the possessor of the Imperial Crown. The simple plan of the conspirators on this occasion, was the extinction of the hazard by the extinction of the instrument. Leopold was to be put to death in the moment of his coronation, and the heir of the former royal race of Hungary, a monk in the convent of St Isidore, was to be placed on the vacant throne. The debate lasted long, and assumed various shapes, in which the Papal Envoy exhibited the complete recovery of his faculties, and showed singular vividness and subtlety in obviating the impediments started to the project of getting rid of Leopold. Still, to overthrow an imperial dynasty, in the very day when its head was in the fulness of power, surrounded by troops, and still more protected by the etiquette that kept all strangers at a distance from the royal person, had difficulties which profoundly perplexed the Barons. But the deed must be done; Colvellino, already obnoxious to suspicion, from his habitual love of blood and violence of life, led the general opinion. After long deliberation, it was decided that, as poison was slow, and might fail—as the pistol was too public, might

miss the mark, and but wound after all—the secure way was the dagger. But how was this to find the Emperor, through a host of attendants, who surrounded him like a Persian monarch, and through ten thousand men-at-arms, covered with iron up to the teeth, and as watchful as wolves? Fra Jiacomo then made his proposal. "To attack the Emperor in his chamber," said he, "would be impossible; and, besides, would be an unmanliness disgraceful to the warlike spirit of the nobles of Hungary." All voices joined in the sentiment. "To attack him in his passage through the streets, on the day of the coronation, would be equally impossible, from the number of his guards, and equally dishonourable to the high character of the Hungarian nobles for fidelity to all who trust them." A second plaudit, almost an acclamation, followed the sentiment. Fra Jiacomo now paused, as evidently waiting to collect his thoughts, and asked in the humblest voice, whether it was absolutely necessary that Leopold should die? "He or we," cried Colvellino, indignant at the delay of the timid old priest. "He or we," echoed all the voices. "I obey," said the Friar, with a sigh, and clasping his trembling hands upon his bosom. "It is not for an old monk, a feeble and simple man like me, my noble lords, to resist the will of so many destined to lead the land of their fathers. But let us, if we must be just, also be merciful. Let the victim die at the high altar

of the cathedral." A murmur rose at the seeming profanation. The Friar's sallow cheek coloured at this mark of disapproval. He was silent; but Colvellino's impatience spoke. "Let us," said he, "have no womanish qualms now; what matters it where or when a tyrant falls? Church or chamber, street or council, all are alike. The only question is, who shall first or surest send the dagger to his heart? Who among us shall be the liberator of his country?" The question remained without an answer. The service was obviously a difficult one at best, and the Brutus was sure of being sacrificed by the swords of the guards. "Cowards!" exclaimed Colvellino, "is this your spirit? 'Tis but a moment since you were all ready to shed your blood for the death of this German puppet, and now you shrink like children." "If it were not in the cathedral," muttered some of the conspirators. "Fools," retorted the haughty Count, "to such scruples all places are cathedrals. But the cause shall not be disgraced by hands like yours. Colvellino himself shall do it; aye, and this good friar shall give me his benediction too on the enterprise." The ruffian burst out into a loud laugh. "Peace, my son," said the priest, with hand meekly waving, and his eyes fixed on the ground. "Let us not disturb our souls, bent as they are on the pious services of the Church and his Holiness the father of the faithful, by unseemly mirth. But let us, in all humility and

sincere soberness, do our duty. The Count Colvellino has nobly offered, with a heroism worthy of his high name, to consummate the freedom of the Hungarian church and state. But this must not be, his life is too precious. If Prince Octar, the last hope of the ancient line of Ladislaus, should die, Count Colvellino is the rightful heir. The hopes of Hungary must not be sacrificed."

The Count's dark eye flashed, and his cheek burned up with the flame of an ambition which he had long cherished, and which had stimulated him to this sudden and suspicious zeal for his country. "The Emperor must not put the crown of Hungary on his head and live," said he, in a tone of expressed scorn and hope. "To-morrow," said the Friar, rising as if he could throw off the infirmities of age in the strength of his resolution—"To-morrow, at the moment of the mass, Leopold dies, and dies by my hand." All stared. "Noble lords," said the Friar, almost abashed into his former humility by the sight of so many bold and proud countenances gazing on him, in every expression of surprise, doubt, wonder, and applause—"Noble lords," he pursued, "what is my life that I should value it, except as the means of serving his Holiness and this illustrious country, which has for so many centuries been the most faithful daughter of the Church? To me life and death are the same. But I shall not die. My sacred function to-morrow will bring me close to the Em-

peror unsuspected. I shall be among the prelates who lead him up to the altar. At the moment when he takes the crown into his hand, and before he has profaned it by its resting on his brow, Hungary shall be free."

A loud outcry of admiration burst from the whole assembly. Colvellino alone seemed to resent the loss of the honour. His countenance lowered, and grasping the self-devoted Friar's sleeve, he said, in a tone of wrath but ill stifled, "Friar, remember your promise. No parleying now. No scruples. Beware of treachery to the cause. But to make all secure, I tell you that you shall be watched. As Grand Chamberlain, I myself shall be on the steps of the altar, and the slightest attempt at evasion shall be punished by a dagger at least as sharp as ever was carried by a priest in either church or chamber." Fra Jiacomo bowed his head to his girdle, and only asked, in a tone of the deepest meekness, "Count, have I deserved this? Noble lords of Hungary, have I deserved this? Is treason laid rightly to my charge? If you doubt me, let me go." He turned to the door as he spoke, but even Colvellino's disdain felt the folly of losing so willing an accomplice, and one who, besides, was now so much master of the conspiracy. "Well, then, so be it," murmured the Count; "the cause will be disgraced by the instrument. But this Emperor at least will molest Hungary no more." Fra

Jiacomo bowed but the deeper. All was now concerted for the deed. The conspirators were appointed to wait in the church of Saint Veronica, behind the cathedral, for the signal of Leopold's death, and thence to proceed to the convent where the heir of Ladislaus was kept, and proclaim him King. Colvellino listened to the latter part of the arrangement with a smile of scorn. They were separated by the sound of the cannon announcing the dawn of the great ceremonial.

The morning of the coronation found all Presburg awake. The streets were thronged before day with citizens; nobles hastening to the palace; troops moving to their various posts in the ceremony; peasants pouring in from all the provinces, in all the wild festivity and uncouth dialects of the land of the Huns. Then came the magnates, riding on their richly-caparisoned horses, and followed by their long train of armed attendants, a most brilliant and picturesque display. The equipages contained all that the kindgom could boast of female beauty and high birth, and the whole formed a singular and vivid contrast of the strange, the lovely, the bold, and the graceful, the rude and the magnificent, the Oriental and the Western—all that a feudal, half-barbarian people could exhibit of wild exultation—and all that an empire as old as Charle-

magne could combine of antique dignity and civilised splendour.

The sun, which so seldom condescends to shine on regal processions, threw his most auspicious beams on the city of Presburg on this memorable day. But it was in the cathedral that all the opulence of the imperial and national pomp was displayed. The aisles were hung with tapestry and banners of the great feudal families, and crowded with the body-guards of the Emperor, and the richly-costumed heydukes and chasseurs of the Hungarian lords. The centre aisle was one canopy of scarlet tissue, covering, like an immense tent, the royal train, the great officers of the court, and the Emperor as he waited for the consecration. Farther on, surrounding the high altar, stood a circle of the Hungarian prelacy in their embroidered robes, surrounding the Archbishop of Presburg, and in their unmoving splendour looking like a vast circle of images of silver and gold. Above them all, glittering in jewels, looked down from clouds of every brilliant dye, and luminous with the full radiance of the morning, the Virgin Mother, in celestial beauty, the patroness of Presburg, a wonder-working Madonna, "whom Jews might kiss, and infidels adore."

At length, to the sound of unnumbered voices, and amid the flourish of trumpets, and the roar of cannon from all the bastions, Leopold entered the

golden rails of the altar, ascended the steps, followed by the great officers of the kingdom, and laid his hand upon the crown. At that moment the Grand Chamberlain, Count Colvellino, had knelt before him to present the book of the oath by which he bound himself to maintain the rights and privileges of Hungary. In the act of pronouncing the oath the Emperor was seen to start back suddenly, and the book fell from his hand. At the same moment a wild scream of agony rang through the cathedral; there was a manifest confusion among the prelacy; the circle was broken, some rushed down the steps; some retreated to the pillars of the high altar; and some seemed stooping, as if round one who had fallen. Vases, flowers, censers, images—all the pompous ornaments which attend the Romish ritual on its great days—were trampled under foot in the tumult; and prelate, priest, and acolyte were flung together in the terror of the time. The first impression of all was, that the Emperor had been assassinated, and the startled flying nobles, and the populace at the gates, spread the report through the city, with the hundred additions of popular alarm. But the imperial body-guard instantly drawing their swords, and pressing their way through the nobles and multitude up to the altar, soon proved that the chief terror was unfounded, by bringing forward the Emperor in their midst, and showing him to the whole assemblage unhurt. He

was received with an acclamation that shook the dome.

But blood had been spilled—the Grand Chamberlain was found pierced to the heart. He had died at the instant from the blow. But by whom he was thus foully murdered, or for what cause, baffled all conjecture. The general idea, from the position in which he fell, was, that he had offered his life for the Emperor's; had thrown himself forward between his royal master and the assassin, and had been slain by accident or revenge. Leopold recollected, too, that, in the act of taking the book of the Oath, he had felt some hand pluck his robe; but, on looking round, had seen only the Grand Chamberlain kneeling before him. Inquiry was urged in all quarters, but in vain. Colvellino was a corpse; he remained bathed in his loyal blood, the heroic defender of his liege lord, the declared victim of his loyalty; and a reward of a thousand ducats was declared on the spot by his indignant sovereign, for the discovery of the murderer. The gates of the cathedral were instantly closed; strict search was made, but totally in vain. Order was slowly restored. But the ceremony was too important to be delayed. The crown was placed upon the Imperial brow, and a shout like thunder hailed Leopold "King of Hungary." In courts all things are forgotten.

As the stately procession returned down the aisle

all was smiles and salutation, answered by the noble ladies of the court and provinces, who sat ranged down the sides according to their precedency, under pavilions tissued with the arms of the great Hungarian families. In this review of the young, the lovely, and the high-born, all eyes gave the prize of beauty, that prize which is awarded by spontaneous admiration, and the long and lingering gaze of silent delight, to the Princess of Marosin. Her dress was, of course, suitable to her rank and relationship to the imperial line, all that magnificence could add to the natural grace, or dignity of the form; but there was in her countenance a remarkable contrast to the general animation of the youthful and noble faces round her—a melancholy that was not grief, and a depth of thought that was not reverie, which gave an irresistible superiority to features, which, under their most careless aspect, must have been pronounced formed in the finest mould of nature. Her eyes were cast down, and even the slight bending of her head had a degree of mental beauty. It was clearly the unconscious attitude of one whose thoughts were busied upon other things than the pomps of the hour. It might have been the transient regret of a lofty spirit for the transitory being of all those splendours which so few years must extinguish in the grave; it might have been the reluctance of a generous and free spirit at the approach of that hour which would

see her hand given by Imperial policy where her heart disowned the gift; it might be patriot sorrow for the fallen glories of Hungary; it might be romance; it might be love. But whatever might be the cause, all remarked the melancholy, and all felt that it gave a deep and touching effect to her beauty, which fixed the eye on her as if spell-bound. Even when the Emperor passed, and honoured the distinguished loveliness of his fair cousin by an especial wave of his sceptred hand, she answered it by scarcely more than a lower bend of the head, and the slight customary pressure of the hand upon the heart. With her glittering robe, worth the purchase of a principality, drawn round her as closely as if it were the common drapery of a statue, she sat not unlike the statue in classic gracefulness, but cold and unmoving as the marble.

But all this was suddenly changed. As the procession continued to pass along, some object arrested her glance which penetrated to her heart. Her cheek absolutely burned with crimson; her eye flashed; her whole frame seemed to be instinct with a new principle of existence; with one hand she threw back the tresses, heavy with jewels, that hung over her forehead, as if they obstructed her power of following the vision; with the other she strongly attempted to still the beatings of her heart; and thus she remained for a few moments, as if unconscious of the place, of the time, and of the

innumerable eyes of wonder and admiration that were fixed upon her. There she sat—her lips apart, her breath suspended, her whole frame fevered with emotion, the statue turned to life—all beauty, feeling, amaze, passion. But a new discharge of cannon, a new flourish of trumpet and cymbal, as the Emperor reached the gates of the cathedral, and appeared before the assembled and shouting thousands without, urged on the procession. The magic was gone. The countenance, this moment like a summer heaven, with every hue of loveliness flying across it in rich succession, was the next colourless. The eye was again veiled in its long lashes; the head was again dejected; the marble had again become classic and cold; the beauty remained, but the joy, the enchantment, was no more.

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The Baron von Herbert was sitting at a desk in the armoury of the palace. Javelins rude enough to have been grasped by the hands of the primordial Huns; bone-headed arrows that had pierced the gilded corslets of the Greeks of Constantinople; stone axes that had dashed their rough way through the iron headpieces of many a son of Saxon chivalry; and the later devices of war—mail, gold-enamelled, silver-twisted, purple-grained—and Austrian, Italian, and Oriental escutcheons gleamed, frowned, gloomed, and rusted, in the huge effigies of a line of warriors, who, if weight of limb, and sullenness

of visage, are the elements of glory, must have fairly trampled out all Greek and all Roman fame.

A key turned in the door, and the Emperor entered hastily, and in evident perturbation. He turned the key again as he entered. The Baron stopped his pen, and awaited the commands of his sovereign. But Leopold was scarcely prepared to give counsel or command. He threw a letter on the table.

"Read this, Von Herbert," said he, "and tell me what you think of it. Is it an impudent falsehood, or a truth, concerning the public safety? Read it again to me."

The Baron read:—

"Emperor, you think yourself surrounded by honest men. You are mistaken. You are surrounded by conspirators. You think that, in offering a reward for Colvellino's murderer, you are repaying a debt of gratitude. You are mistaken. You are honouring the memory of a murderer. You think that, in giving the hand of the Princess of Marosin to Prince Charles of Buntzlau, you are uniting two persons of rank in an honourable marriage. You are mistaken. You are pampering a coxcomb's vanity, and breaking a noble heart. You think that, in sending your Pandours to scour the country, you can protect your court, your palace, or yourself.

You are mistaken. The whole three are in *my* power. SPERANSKI."

The Baron laid down the paper, and gravely paused for the Emperor's commands. But the Emperor had none to give. He put the simple query—"Is this a burlesque or a reality? Is the writer a charlatan or a conspirator?"

"Evidently something of both, in my conception," said the Colonel; "the paper is not courtly, but it may be true, nevertheless. The writer is apparently not one of your Majesty's chamberlains, and yet he is clearly master of some points that mark him for either a very dangerous inmate of the court, or a very useful one."

Leopold's anxious gesture bade the Baron proceed. He looked again over the letter, and commented on it as he passed along.

"'Surrounded by conspirators!' Possible enough. The Hungarian nobles never knew how to obey. They must be free as the winds, or in fetters. The mild government of Austria is at once too much felt and too little. No government or all tyranny, is the only maxim for the magnates. If not slaves, they will be conspirators."

"Then this rascal, this Speranski, tells the truth after all?" said the Emperor.

"For the fact of conspiracy I cannot answer yet," said Von Herbert; "but for the inclination I can,

at any hour of the twenty-four." He proceeded with the letter—"You are honouring the memory of a murderer."

"An atrocious and palpable calumny!" exclaimed the Emperor. "What! the man who died at my feet? If blood is not to answer for honour and loyalty, where can the proof be given? He had got, besides, everything that he could desire. I had just made him Grand Chamberlain."

Von Herbert's grave countenance showed that he was not so perfectly convinced.

"I knew Colvellino," said he, "and if appearances were not so much in his favour by the manner of his death, I should have thought him one of the last men in your Majesty's dominions to die for loyalty."

"You are notoriously a philosopher, Von Herbert," said Leopold, impatiently. "Your creed is mistrust."

"I knew the Grand Chamberlain from our school-days," said the Baron, calmly. "At school he was haughty and headstrong. We entered the royal Hungarian guard together; there he was selfish and profligate. We then separated for years. On my return as your Majesty's aide-de-camp, I found him the successor to an estate which he had ruined, the husband of a wife whom he had banished from his palace, the Colonel of a regiment of Hulans which he had turned into a school of tyranny, and Grand Chamberlain to your Majesty, an office which

I have strong reason to think he used but as a step to objects of a more daring ambition."

"But his death—his courageous devotion of himself—the dagger in his heart!" exclaimed the Emperor.

"They perplex, without convincing me," said the Baron.

He looked again at the letter, and came to the words, "Breaking a noble heart."

"What can be the meaning of this?" asked Leopold, angrily. "Am I not to arrange the alliances of my family as I please? Am I to forfeit my word to my relative, the Prince of Buntzlau, when he makes the most suitable match in the empire for my relative the Princess of Marosin? This is mere insolence, read no more."

The Baron laid down the letter, and stood in silence.

"Apropos of the Princess," said Leopold, willing to turn the conversation from topics which vexed him, "has there been any further intelligence of her mysterious purchase—that far-famed plunder of the Turk, her Hungarian *chef d'œuvre?*"

"If your Majesty alludes to the Princess's very splendid watch," said the Baron, "I understand that all possible inquiry has been made, but without the effect of tracing any connection between its sale and the unfortunate assassination of the Turkish envoy."

"So, my cousin," said the Emperor, with a half smile, "is to be set down by the scandalous Chronicle of Presburg as an accomplice in rifling the pockets of Mohammed? But the whole place seems full of gipsyism, gossiping, and juggling. I should not wonder if that superannuated belle, the Countess Joblonsky, lays the loss of her *pendule* to my charge, and that the Emperor shall quit Hungary with the character of a receiver of stolen goods."

"Your Majesty may be the depredator to a much more serious extent, if you will condescend but to take the Countess's heart along with you," said the Colonel, with a grave smile. "It is, I have no doubt, too loyal not to be quite at your Majesty's mercy."

"Hah!" said Leopold; "I must be expeditious then, or she will be *devoté*, or in the other world—incapable of any love but for a lapdog, or turned into a canonised saint. But in the mean time look to these nobles. If conspiracy there be, let us be ready for it. I have confidence in your Pandours. They have no love for the Hungarians. Place a couple of your captains in my antechamber. Let the rest be on the alert. You will be in the palace, and within call, for the next forty-eight hours."

The Emperor then left the room. Von Herbert wrote an order to the Major of the Pandours for a detachment to take the duty of the imperial apartments. The evening was spent at the opera, fol-

lowed by a court ball; and the Emperor retired, more than satisfied with the dancing loyalty of the Hungarian beaux and belles.

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The night was lovely, and the moon shone with full-orbed radiance upon the cloth of gold, embroidered velvet curtains, and high enchased silver sculptures of the imperial bed. The Emperor was deep in a midsummer night's dream of waltzing with a dozen winged visions, a ballet in the Grand Opera given before their Majesties of Fairyland, on the occasion of his arrival in their realm. He found his feet buoyant with all the delightful levity of his new region; wings could not have made him spurn the ground with more rapturous elasticity. The partner round whom he whirled was Oberon's youngest daughter, just come from a finishing school in the Evening Star, and *brought out* for the first time. But a sudden sound of evil smote his ear; every fairy drooped at the instant; he felt his winged heels heavy as if they were booted for a German parade; his blooming partner grew dizzy in the very moment of a whirl, and dropped fainting in his arms; Titania, with a scream, expanded her pinions, and darted into the tops of the tallest trees. Oberon, with a frown, descended from his throne, and stalked away in indignant majesty.

The sound was soon renewed; it was a French quadrille, played by a Golden Apollo on the harp—

a sound, however pleasing to earthly ears, too coarse for the exquisite sensibilities of more ethereal tempers. The God of Song was sitting on a beautiful pendule, with the name of *Sismonde* conspicuous on its dial above, and the name of the Countess Joblonsky engraved on its marble pedestal below. The Emperor gazed first with utter astonishment, then with a burst of laughter; his words had been verified. He was in a new position. He was to be the "receiver of stolen goods" after all. But in the moonlight lay at his feet a paper; it contained these words:—"Emperor—You have friends about you, on whom you set no value; you have enemies, too, about you, of whom you are not aware. Keep the *pendule;* it will serve to remind you of the hours that may pass between the throne and the dagger. It will serve, also, to remind you how few hours it may take to bring a noble heart to the altar and to the grave. The toy is yours. The Countess Joblonsky has already received more than its value.

SPERANSKI."

The Countess Joblonsky *had been* the handsomest woman in Paris twenty years before. But in Paris, the reign of beauty never lasts supreme longer than a new Opera—possibly, among other reasons, for the one that both are exhibited without mercy

for the eyes or ears of mankind. The Opera displays its charms incessantly, until all that remain to witness the triumph are the fiddlers and the scene-shifters. The Belle electrifies the world with such persevering attacks on their nervous system, that it becomes absolutely benumbed. A second season of triumph is as rare for the Belle as the Opera, and no man living ever has seen, or will see, a third season for either. The Countess retired at the end of her second season, like Diocletian, but not, like Diocletian, to the cultivation of cabbages. She drew off her forces to Vienna, which she entered with the air of a conqueror, and the rights of one; for the fashion that has fallen into the "sere and yellow leaf" in Paris, is entitled to consider itself in full bloom at Vienna. At the Austrian capital she carried all before her, for the time. She had all the first of the very first circle in her chains. All the Archdukes were at her bidding; were fed at her *petits soupers* of five hundred hungry noblesse, *en comité;* were pilfered at her loto-tables; were spell-bound by her smiles, laughed at in her boudoir, and successively wooed to make the fairest of Countesses the haughtiest of Princesses. Still the last point was incomplete,—she was still in widowed loveliness.

The coronation suddenly broke up the Vienna circle. She who had hitherto led or driven the world, now condescended to follow it; and the Countess instantly removed her whole establish-

ment, her French Abbé, her Italian Chevaliers, ordinaires and extraordinaires, her Flemish lapdogs, her Ceylonese monkeys, and her six beautiful Polish horses, to Presburg, with the determination to die *devoté*, or make an impress on the imperial soul, which Leopold should carry back, and the impression along with it, to Vienna. But cares of state had till now interposed a shield between the Emperor's bosom and the lady's diamond eyes. She had at last begun actually to despair; and on this morning she had summoned her Abbé to teach her the most becoming way for a beauty to renounce the world. She was enthroned on a couch of rose-coloured silk, worthy of Cytherea herself, half-sitting, half-reposing, with her highly rouged cheek resting on her snowy hand, that hand supported on a richly bound volume of the Life of La Vallière, delicious model of the wasted dexterity, cheated ambition, and profitless passion of a court beauty, and her eyes gazing on the letter which this pretty charlatan wrote on her knees, in the incredible hope of making a Frenchman feel. The Countess decided upon trying the La Vallière experiment upon the spot, writing a letter to the Emperor, declaring the "secret flame which had so long consumed her," "confessing" her resolution to fly into a convent, and compelling his obdurate spirit to meditate upon the means of rescuing so brilliant an ornament of his court from four bare walls, the fearful sight of

monks and nuns, and the performance of matins and vespers as duly as the day.

At this critical moment, one of the imperial carriages entered the *porte cochère*. A gentleman of the court, stiff with embroidery, and stiffer with Austrian etiquette, descended from it, was introduced by the pages in attendance, and with his knee almost touching the ground, as to the future possessor of the diadem, presented to the Countess a morocco case. It contained a letter. The perusal of the missive brought into the fair reader's face a colour that fairly outburned all the labours of her three hours' toilette. It requested the Countess Joblonsky's acceptance of the trifle accompanying the note, and was signed Leopold. The case was eagerly opened. A burst of brilliancy flashed into the gazer's eyes. It was the superb watch, the long-talked of—the watch of the Princess Marosin, and now given as an acknowledgment of the personal superiority of her handsome competitor. She saw a crown glittering in strong imagination above her head. The Life of La Vallière was spurned from her. The Abbé was instantly countermanded. The Countess had given up the nunnery; she ordered her six Polish steeds, and drove off to make her acknowledgments to the Emperor in person.

But what is the world? The Countess had come at an inauspicious time. She found the streets

crowded with people talking of some extraordinary event, though whether of the general conflagration, or the flight of one of the Archduchesses, it was impossible to discover from the popular ideas on the subject. Further on, she found her progress impeded by the troops. The palace was double-guarded. There had evidently been some formidable occurrence. A scaffold was standing in the court, with two dead bodies in the Pandour uniform lying upon it. Cannon, with lighted matches, were pointed down the principal streets. The regiment of Pandours passed her, with Von Herbert at their head, looking so deeply intent upon something or other, that she in vain tried to obtain a glance towards her equipage. The Pandours, a gallant-looking but wild set, rushed out of the gates, and galloped forward to scour the forest like wolf-dogs in full cry. The regiment of Imperial Guards, with Prince Charles of Buntzlau witching the world with the best-perfumed pair of mustaches, and the most gallantly embroidered mantle in any hussar corps in existence, rode past, with no more than a bow. All was confusion, consternation, and the clank of sabre-sheaths, trumpets, and kettle-drums. The Countess gave up the day and the diadem, returned to her palace, and began the study of La Vallière again.

The story at length transpired. The Emperor's life had been attempted. His own detail to his

Privy Council was—That before daylight he had found himself suddenly attacked in his bed by ruffians. His arms had been pinioned during his sleep. He called out for the Pandour officers who had been placed in his antechamber; but to his astonishment, the flash of a lamp, borne by one of the assailants, showed him those Pandours the most active in his seizure. Whether their purpose was to carry him off, or to kill him on the spot; to convey him to some cavern or forest, where they might force him to any conditions they pleased, or to extinguish the imperial authority in his person at once, was beyond his knowledge; but the vigour of his resistance had made them furious, and the dagger of one of the conspirators was already at his throat, when he saw the hand that held it lopped off by the sudden blow of a sabre from behind. Another hand now grasped his hair, and he felt the edge of a sabre, which slightly wounded him in the neck, but before the blow could be repeated, the assailant fell forward, with a curse and a groan, and died at his feet, exclaiming that they were betrayed. This produced palpable consternation among them; and on hearing a sound outside, like the trampling of the guards on their rounds, they had silently vanished, leaving him bleeding and bound. He had now made some effort to reach the casement and cry out for help, but a handkerchief had been tied across his face, his arms and feet were fastened

by a scarf, and he lay utterly helpless. In a few moments after, he heard steps stealing along the chamber. It was perfectly dark; he could see no one; but he gave himself up for lost. The voice, however, told him that there was no enemy now in the chamber, and offered to loose the bandage from his face, on condition that he would answer certain questions. The voice was that of an old man, said he, but there was a tone of honesty about it that made me promise at once.

"I have saved your life," said the stranger; "what will you give me for this service?"

"If this be true, ask what you will."

"I demand a free pardon for the robbery of the Turkish courier, for shooting the Turkish envoy, and for stabbing the Grand Chamberlain in your presence."

"Are you a fool or a madman who ask this?"

"To you neither. I demand, further, your pardon for stripping Prince Charles of Buntzlau of his wife and his whiskers together—for marrying the Princess of Marosin—and for turning your Majesty into an acknowledged lover of the Countess Joblonsky."

"Who and what are you? Villain, untie my hands."

The cord was snapped asunder.

"Tell me your name, or I shall call the guards, and have you hanged on the spot."

"My name!" the fellow exclaimed, with a laugh, —"Oh, it is well enough known everywhere,—at court, in the cottages, in the city, and on the high-road—by your Majesty's guards, and by your Majesty's subjects. I am the Pandour of Pandours—your correspondent, and now your cabinet counsellor. Farewell, Emperor, and remember—Speranski!"

"The cords were at the instant cut from my feet. I sprang after him; but I might as well have sprung after my own shadow. He was gone—but whether into the air or the earth, or whether the whole dialogue was not actually the work of my own imagination, favoured by the struggle with the conspirators, I cannot tell to this moment. One thing, however, was unquestionable, that I had been in the hands of murderers, for I stumbled over the two bodies of the assassins who were cut down in the mêlée. The first lamp that was brought in showed me also, that the two Pandour captains had been turned into the two Palatines of Sidlitz and Frankerin, but by what magic I cannot yet conjecture."

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A more puzzling affair never had bewildered the high and mighty functionaries of the imperial court. They pondered upon it for the day, and they might have added the year to their deliberations without being nearer the truth. The roll of the Pandours had been called over. None were missing except

the two captains; and certainly the two conspirators, though in the Pandour uniform, were not of the number.

More perplexity still. The imperial horse-guards returned in the evening terribly offended by a day's gallop through the vulgarity of the Hungarian thickets, but suffering no other loss than of a few plumes and tassels, if we except one, of pretty nearly the same kind, Prince Charles of Buntzlau. The Prince had been tempted to spur his charger through a thicket. He led the way in pursuit of the invisible enemy; he never came back. His whole regiment galloped after him in all directions. They might as well have hunted a mole; he must have gone under ground—but where, was beyond the brains of his brilliantly dressed troopers. He was *un prince perdu.*

Leopold was indignant at this frolic, for as such he must conceive it; and ordered one of his aides-de-camp to wait at the quarters of the corps, until the future bridegroom grew weary of his wild-goose chase, and acquaint him that the next morning was appointed for his marriage. But he returned not.

Next morning there was another fund of indignation prepared for the astonished Emperor. The bride was as undiscoverable as the bridegroom. The palace of the Princess de Marosin had been entered in the night; but her attendants could tell no more than that they found her chamber doors

open, and their incomparable tenant flown, like a bird from its gilded cage. All search was made, and made in vain. The Prince returned after a week's detention by robbers in a cave. He was ill received. Leopold, astonished and embarrassed, conscious that he was treading on a soil of rebellion, and vexed by his personal disappointments, broke up his court, and rapidly set out for the hereditary dominions.

He had subsequently serious affairs to think of. The French interest in Turkey roused the Ottoman to a war. Orders were given for a general levy through the provinces, and the Emperor himself commenced a tour of inspection of the frontier lying towards Roumelia. In the Croatian levy, he was struck peculiarly with the Count Corneglio Bancaleone, Colonel of a corps of Pandours, eminent for beauty of countenance and dignity of form; for activity in the manœuvres of his active regiment, and one of the most popular of the nobles of Croatia. The Emperor expressed himself so highly gratified with the Count's conduct, that, as a mark of honour, he proposed to take up his quarters in the palace. The Count bowed; reluctance was out of the question. The Emperor came, and was received with becoming hospitality; but where was the lady of the mansion? She was unfortunately indisposed. The Emperor expressed his regret, and the apology was accepted; but in the evening, while, after a

day of reviews and riding through the Croatian hills, he was enjoying the lovely view of the sun going down over the Adriatic, and sat at a window covered with fruits and flowers, impearled with the dew of a southern twilight, a Hungarian song struck his ear, that had been a peculiar favourite of his two years before, during his stay in Presburg. He inquired of the Count who was the singer. Bancaleone's confusion was visible. In a few moments the door suddenly opened, and two beautiful infants, who had strayed away from their attendants, rambled into the room. The Count in vain attempted to lead them out. His imperial guest was delighted with them, and begged that they might be allowed to stay.

The eldest child, to pay his tribute to the successful advocate on the occasion, repeated the Hungarian song. "Who had taught him?" "His mother, who was a Hungarian." Bancaleone rose in evident embarrassment, left the room, and shortly returned leading that mother. She fell at the Emperor's feet. She was the Princess of Marosin, lovelier than ever; with the glow of the mountain air on her cheek, and her countenance lighted up with health, animation, and expressive beauty. Leopold threw his arms round his lovely relative, and exhibited the highest gratification in finding her again, and finding her so happy.

But sudden reflections covered the imperial brow

with gloom. The mysterious deaths, the conspiracies, the sanguinary violences of Presburg, rose in his mind, and he felt the painful necessity of explanation.

Bancaleone had left the room; but an attendant opened the door, saying that a Pandour had brought a despatch for his Majesty. The Pandour entered, carrying a portefeuille in his hand. The Emperor immediately recognised him, as having often attracted his notice on parade, by his activity on horseback and his handsome figure. After a few *tours d'addresse*, which showed his skill in disguise, the Count threw off the Pandour, and explained the mystifications of Presburg.

"I had been long attached," said he, "to the Princess of Marosin, before your Majesty had expressed your wishes in favour of the alliance of Prince Charles of Buntzlau. I immediately formed the presumptuous determination of thwarting the Prince's objects. I entered, by the favour of my old friend, Colonel von Herbert, as a private in his Pandours, and was thus on the spot to attend to my rival's movements. The Pandours are, as your Majesty knows, great wanderers through the woods, and one of them, by some means or other, had found, or perhaps robbed, a part of the Turkish courier's despatches. These despatches he showed to a comrade, who showed them to me; they were of importance, for they developed a plot which the

Turks were concerting with some profligate nobles of Presburg, to carry off your Majesty into the Turkish dominions, a plot which waited only for the arrival of the Turkish envoy. I got leave of absence, joined some of the rabble of gypsies who tell fortunes, and rob when they have no fortunes to tell. We met the Turk, a mêlée ensued, he was unfortunately killed; but I secured the despatches. The Turk deserved his fate as a conspirator. His papers contained the names of twenty Magnates, all purchased by Turkish gold. The Magnates were perplexed by his death. They now waited for the arrival of a Romish priest, who was to manage the ecclesiastical part of your Majesty's murder. I went into the woods again, caught the Cardinal alive on his march, put him into the hands of the gypsies, who, feeling no homage for his vocation, put him on a sanative and antipolitical regimen of bread and water for a fortnight, and then dismissed him over the frontier. On the day of the coronation, your Majesty was to have died by the hands of Colvellino. I volunteered the office. Colvellino followed me, to keep me to my duty. I plucked your robe to put you on your guard; saw the Grand Chamberlain's dagger drawn to repay me for my officiousness, and in self-defence was forced to use my own. He was a traitor, and he died only too honourable a death."

"But the magic that changed the Pandour cap-

tains into Palatines? That Speranski too, who had the impudence to lecture me in my bonds?" asked the Emperor, with a smile.

"All was perfectly simple," said the Count; "the two captains were invited to a supper in the palace, which soon disqualified them for taking your Majesty's guard. Their uniforms were then given to two of the Palatines, who undertook to carry off your Majesty, or kill you in case of resistance. But no man can work without instruments. One of the gypsies, who was to have acted as postilion on the occasion, sold his employment for that night to another, who sold his secret to me. I remained in the next chamber to your Majesty's during the night. I had posted a dozen of the Pandours within call, in case of your being in actual danger. But my first purpose was to baffle the conspiracy without noise; however, the ruffians were more savage than I had thought them, and I was nearly too late. But two strokes of the sabre were enough, and the two Palatines finished their career as expeditiously at least as if they had died upon the scaffold. In this portefeuille are the Turk's despatches, the Cardinal's prayers, Colvellino's plot, and the Magnate's oaths."

Leopold rose and took him by the hand. "Count, you shall be my aide-de-camp, and a general. You deserve every praise that can be given to skill and courage. But the watch, the pendule, the trap for

that prince of parroquets, Buntzlau?" said Leopold, bursting out into a laugh fatal to all etiquette.

"Your Majesty will excuse me," said the Count; "these are a lady's secrets, or the next to a lady's, a man of fashion's. Mystification all. Magic everywhere; and it is not over yet. The Vienna paper this morning met my astonished eye with a full account of the marriage of his Serene Highness of Buntzlau with the illustrious widow of the Count Lublin nèe Joblonsky. Capitally matched. He brings her his ringlets, she brings him her rouge. He enraptures her with the history of his loves; she can give him love for love at least. He will portion her with his debts, and she is as equal as any Countess in Christendom to return the politeness in kind. *Vive le beau marriage!* A coxcomb is the true *cupidon* for a coquette all over the world."

THE BEAUTY DRAUGHT.

[*MAGA*. DECEMBER 1840.]

CHAPTER I.

JAQUELINE TRIQUET was the daughter of a *propriétaire*, or owner, of a very small farm, near a village in the Bourbonnois, the real name of which it might be dangerous to state, for reasons that will be apparent to such of our fair readers as may condescend patiently to toil through what is to follow. Let it therefore be called, after the patron saint of France, St Denis.

Jaqueline, our heroine, was about the middle height of her sex, but had the appearance of being somewhat shorter, in consequence of the rather masculine breadth of her frame and vigorous "development" of muscle. These were, however, great advantages to one compelled to live a life of labour, and to associate with persons of a class not particularly celebrated for delicacy of manners or feeling; and of these advantages Jaqueline evinced that she was perfectly aware, by frequently asserting that she was "not afraid of any man."

Her other personal qualifications were a compact, round, good-humoured-looking countenance, with two very bright black useful eyes, which had an odd way of trying to look at each other—a propensity that, if not over-violent, has been pronounced exceedingly attractive by many connoisseurs of beauty. But, alas! Jaqueline was no beauty, whatever she might have been in early youth; for that dreadful enemy of fair faces, the small-pox, had attacked her in his angry mood, and sadly disfigured every charm save that over which even he hath no power, the all-pleasing expression of good-humour. So that remained for Jaqueline; and not that alone. Not merely was the cheerful outward sign upon her homely sunburnt countenance, but the blessed reality was within; and there was not a merrier, more industrious, nor lighter-hearted lass in the whole *commune*. Artless, simple, and kind to all, she was a general favourite; and with general favour she remained apparently quite content, till certain of her younger companions got married, and then she felt occasionally dull—she knew not why.

"It is not that I envy them, I am sure," said she to herself in one of her musing fits; "no—I rejoice in their happiness. If Franchette had not married Jean Clement, I am sure I never should, even if he had asked me, which he never did. And then Jaques Roget, and Pierre Dupin, and Philippe Chamel—bless them all, and their wives too, I say!

I wish them happy; I'm sure I do. I don't envy them; I'm sure I don't. And yet—yet—I can't think what's the matter with me!"

Poor Jaqueline's was no very uncommon case. She was not in love with any particular person. Her heart was her own, and a good warm heart it was, and she felt conscious that it was well worth somebody's winning; therefore it is no marvel that at last she breathed a secret wish that somebody would set about the task in earnest.

Such was the state of her feelings when her father, who was a widower, resolved to intrust her with the management of certain affairs in the way of business at Moulins, which he had hitherto always attended to personally.

"The change will do you good, my child," said he; "and Madame Margot will be delighted to see you, if it were only for your poor dear mother's sake, rest her soul! She always asks after you, and has invited me to bring you with me a thousand times. So you may be sure of a welcome from her. And Nicolas is a good lad too, and has managed the business admirably since his father's death, though he is such a lively fellow that one could hardly expect it. He'll *chaperon* you, and do the *aimable*, no doubt. So, *vale!* never fear. And if you find yourself happy with them, and Madame presses you to stay—why, it's only August now, and I sha'n't want you home till the vintage—

so, do as you like, my good child; I can trust you."

The journey to Moulins was little more than ten leagues; but travelling in the cross-roads of the Bourbonnois is a very rough and tedious affair. To Jaqueline it appeared the most important event in her life; and as she rode, in the cool of a Monday morning, upon her father's nag, to a neighbouring farmer's, about two leagues on her way, she felt half inclined to turn back, and request to be left at home in quiet, rather than go on to be mingled in scenes of gaiety, wherein something whispered to her that she was not likely to be very happy. But the congratulations of the said farmer's daughters, who all declared how much they envied her, and how delighted they should be to be in her place, to which, perhaps, may be added the invigorating effects of a most unromantic, substantial breakfast, caused a marvellous change in her feelings, insomuch that she appeared the merriest of the party, as they walked afterward to the summit of a rising ground, from which her further progress on foot into the high-road might be clearly indicated. There, after receiving minute instructions, by attending to which she was assured that it was impossible she could mistake her way, she took leave of her friends, with the feeling that she was about to be launched into a new sort of world.

The sun shone brightly, the birds sang merrily,

and ever and anon a passing breeze rustled cheerfully the foliage above and all around, as Jaqueline stepped lightly on, scarcely encumbered by her not very elegant nor ponderous bundle, containing much less than the fair sex usually require when going on a visit. But this lightness of wardrobe caused the not least agreeable of her anticipations, as her father had given her a *carte blanche* to supply its defects from the *magasins* of Moulins, stipulating only that in her headgear there should be no deviation from the established costume of their ancestresses, who, from generation to generation, had worn, or rather carried, perched forward upon their caps, the small, boat-like, diminutive-crowned hat called *La Fougère.*

Now, whether she had been thinking too much about how her new *fougère* should be trimmed, or that the plain directions of her friends were too perplexingly minute to be borne clearly in memory, cannot be ascertained; but at a spot where a single footpath became double, she hesitated and looked round, and endeavoured to recollect. There was no one near to bias her choice; so she decided for herself, and took the left path, uttering the self-comforting ejaculation—"I am sure that this is the right." Therefore she walked briskly on, till visited by unpleasant misgivings that her steps had deviated too far to the left; and then followed doubt upon doubt, fast walking, stopping, hesita-

tion, and looking about, as usual in such cases, till it became too evident that she had contrived to do that which her kind friends pronounced to be impossible. She had lost her way.

Now, losing one's way is far from agreeable, even to common, everyday people; but when such a misfortune occurs to heroines, it is a much more serious piece of business, inasmuch as their blundering always exercises an evil influence over the weather. No matter how fine and cloudless the day may have previously been, no sooner is a heroine bewildered, and, amid unknown tracks, compelled to "give it up" as a too-puzzling riddle, than all the elements combine to increase her perplexity. The thunders incontinently commence growling over her head, the vivid lightning flashes all around, the winds blow a hurricane, and down comes the rain like a cataract. The moral intended to be drawn from such often-repeated disasters probably is, that young ladies should be careful of their footsteps; for certainly the elements of society are not less pitiless to an erring female than are those of nature toward a lost heroine.

Jaqueline's predicament was no exception to the general rule, which is not surprising, as the sudden and violent summer storms of the Bourbonnois are proverbial. However, before she was quite "wet through," she had the heroine's usual good-luck of finding shelter in the ruins of an old castle, to which

she was guided by the welcome sight of a small wreath of smoke, ascending from a corner of the dilapidated building. After peeping cautiously from behind the open folding-shutter of an unglazed window, and ascertaining the sex of the lonely tenant, she ventured to enter, and was most kindly welcomed by an aged woman, whose bodily infirmities had in no degree affected the organs of speech. So Jaqueline soon had the consolation of learning how and where she had missed her way, and also of hearing many particulars of her hostess's life, which need not be repeated here. The best of the affair, however, was, that the old body had both the means and the inclination to make her guest comfortable. There was plenty of dry wood piled up in the corner of the room, and it was not spared. The fire crackled and blazed cheerfully; and then she placed certain culinary earthen vessels upon and around it, and at the end of a string in the front suspended a fowl, over the roasting of which she sate down to watch and talk.

The rain still continued, and Jaqueline felt grateful; therefore, after some little necessary attention to her dress, she thought she could not do better than, as the phrase is, "make herself generally useful." So she bustled about, and evinced a knowledge of the *menage* and the *cuisine* that raised her greatly in the estimation of her entertainer.

The wing of a fowl, and *une petite goutte* of wine,

as they walked round and about the ruins of the castle, every part of which she explained the former uses of, with an accurracy that might have satisfied the most curious inquirer, but which quite bewildered our heroine. What people could have wanted with so many different *salons*, galleries, and apartments, was to her quite a mystery, and she gazed upon the massive thickness of the walls with feelings approaching to reverence. Consequently, when they were driven in by the promised storm, she was precisely in the right state of mind to be strongly impressed by the awful long stories that her hostess had to relate of and concerning the former owners of the place. She told how the castle had been ransacked and set on fire at the Revolution, and how Monsieur le Comte de Montjeu and his family made their escape into foreign parts, and were not heard of till after the Restoration, when the young Comte Henri, whom she had nursed when an infant, suddenly made his appearance. Of him she spake in raptures. He had purchased the site of the ruins, and some land adjacent, and would doubtless some day restore all to its former splendour, as he held some very lucrative appointment at Paris. Moreover, she described him as a very handsome young man, though she feared that he was somewhat too much addicted to gallantry and gaiety. But then, she added, that was a family failing, and put her in mind of

some passage in the life of his grandfather, which she immediately proceeded to relate; and so on, and on, and on continuously, as though reading from a book, went the old lady with her long tales; and Jaqueline listened, first with curiosity, then from complaisance (as it was evident that the narrator took pleasure in her own performance), and at length with a rather dim apprehension of what she heard. This may be accounted for, either by her not being able to sleep on the previous night, for thinking of her intended journey, or from the fatigue and exposure to sunshine and storm during the day, or by her hostess's hospitable entertainment at dinner and supper (the latter meal forming an interlude between two of the long stories), or by the whole combined. But be the cause what it may, she nodded, as most folks would under similar circumstances, and then was suddenly aroused by missing the monotonous tones of her entertainer, to whom she apologised, and shook herself into an attentive attitude. The apology was graciously received, and Jaqueline's drowsiness dispelled for a while by a legend about a spring, just at the bottom of the hill, the water of which was reported to have the power of causing young maidens, who drank thereof, to become wonderfully fascinating, and to attract lovers of every degree.

"You shall take a draught of it in the morning, *ma bonne*," she said. "Don't be afraid; you will

have your wish before you come back from Moulins, I'm pretty sure. If not, however, call upon me on your way back. However, take the water in the morning. Perhaps it mayn't operate immediately, but perhaps it may; for I remember hearing of two young ladies who"—and off went the old lady into another long story about romantic lovers of high degree; and the result of all was, that Jaqueline went late to bed, with her head full of strange and multitudinous fancies.

CHAPTER II.

"WHAT a lovely morning it is!" thought Jaqueline. "How pure and delicious the water of this spring looks! As to what the old lady says about its wonderful qualities, I can't believe that; but, however, I will taste it. There! oh, how cool and refreshing!"

Suddenly there was heard the sound of a horn at a short distance, and a moment after a hunting party came galloping toward the fountain. Jaqueline would have hid herself, but it was too late; and ere she had decided in what direction to make her escape, a young, handsome, elegantly dressed cavalier, who led the party, threw himself from his horse, and, respectfully approaching her, begged that she would not be alarmed.

"Thank ye!" said Jaqueline; "no, I an't frightened; only I stopped just to see which way you was a-galloping, because I don't want to be run over."

"Charming creature!" exclaimed the cavalier, "do you suppose it possible that any human being would hurt a hair of your head?"

"I don't know about that," replied Jaqueline. "All as I can say is, that I don't know any reason why they should; for I never did no harm to nobody as I know of."

"Never, I am sure," said the young man. "No; innocence and benevolence are too plainly expressed in every feature of that lovely countenance. May I crave to know by what happy chance you have been led to this sequestered spot?"

"I can't see exactly as that's any business of yours," replied Jaqueline; "howsomever, if you must know, I'm going to the Cock and Bottle in the high-road, where I hope to find a *patache* to take me to Moulins; so, as the good old dame is asleep, and I don't like to wake her, if you or some of your people will direct me, I shall feel obliged to you: but I'll thank you not to give me no more of your fine speeches, that's all."

"A miracle! She despises flattery!" exclaimed the enraptured youth, clasping his hands together; and then, without farther ceremony, he threw himself upon his knees, made a regular fervent offer of

himself and fortune, declared himself to be the Comte Henri de Montjeu, and, seizing the hard hand of his inamorata, pressed it to his lips.

"Drat the man! He's mad!" cried Jaqueline, attempting to extricate her hand; but, the moment after, finding that he did not bite it, she allowed it to remain where it was, and, heaving a sigh of compassion, said to herself, "What a pity! He is so very handsome!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the Comte, "you sigh! You pity me, and pity is—Well, well. What more can I expect at present? I have been rash. I have alarmed you, I fear; but henceforth I will be calm," and he got up and gave himself a violent slap on the forehead to prove his intention.

"Ah!" thought Jaqueline, "you may knock, but there's nobody at home, I guess. Bless my heart! what a pity, so handsome as you are!"

"I will believe that by time and opportunity, and the most devoted attentions, I may at length hope to excite an interest in your heart?" said the Comte inquiringly, and again taking her hand.

"The best way is to humour him, I suppose," thought Jaqueline, as she replied, "Very likely you may, for I can't say but I'm sorry for you. Howsomever, you must mind and behave yourself."

This encouragement exhilarated the Comte so powerfully, that, after uttering sundry brief rhapsodies, his lips approached so near her sunburnt

cheeks, that he seemed on the point of forgetting her injunctions concerning his behaviour, when she called him to order by the ejaculation of "Paws off!" on hearing which he bowed low, and retired to give certain instructions to his followers. These were executed with wonderful rapidity; for Jaqueline had barely time to tuck up and adjust her clothes for running, or, as she called it, "make a bolt," when she found herself surrounded by the horsemen, one of whom, the ugliest of the lot, was mounted before a pillion, upon which the Comte begged he might have the honour of placing her. To this, after some demur, she submitted, because escape on foot now seemed impossible; but no sooner had she taken her seat, than she whispered in the ear of the man before her, "Your master's mad, that's clear. So contrive, if you can, to let us get away from him; and if you take me safe to the Cock and Bottle, I'll not stand upon trifles, but make it worth your while. What d'ye say?"

"What do I say?" replied the man, in the same low tone, and looking round with a most hideous leer. "I say that I wouldn't mind going all over the world for you, without fee or reward, except, perhaps"—(and he smacked his thick wide lips too significantly)—"for I'm blessed if you ain't just about the nicest girl I ever clapped my eyes on." And again he leered so frightfully, that Jaqueline

would have jumped down had she not been strapped to the pillion.

"The holy Virgin protect me," she murmured; "what sort of folks have I got among?" and she looked round timidly, but could discern no cause for alarm, unless it were that the eyes of all the party seemed fixed upon her, and every countenance was expressive of deep admiration. This was certainly a sort of homage to which she had been unused, and probably, on that account, acted more strongly on her feelings; for she immediately decided that such handsome, agreeable faces could belong only to men utterly devoid of evil intentions. Having thus made up her mind, she rather enjoyed the first part of her ride, as they bounded along merrily across the country, and the Comte rode by her side, ever and anon making observations and complimentary speeches, to which she usually replied by hoping that they were in the right road to the Cock and Bottle.

"*Soyez tranquille!*" was his invariable answer to that question; and so they held on their way, till they arrived at a large house, into the courtyard of which he led the cavalcade, and then, dismounting from his horse, he informed her that she was at her journey's end, and assisted her to alight at the principal entrance, which seemed to her more fit for a palace than an inn.

"You will please to take every care of this young

lady, for my sake, my good Madame Rigaud," said the Comte to an elderly female, who stood, with several livery servants, in the hall.

"This way, Mademoiselle," said the said housekeeper, with a curtsy, and she led Jaqueline through divers passages and elegant apartments, at which she marvelled exceedingly, although she had heard strange stories of the magnificence of certain large hotels in Paris and elsewhere. But the splendour of the chamber into which she was at last ushered was quite overpowering, and she stood gazing at the profusion of rich velvet and silk surrounding her, till roused by Madame Rigaud's request to be favoured with her commands.

"Bless your heart, my good madame!" exclaimed Jaqueline, "this is no place for me! I'm only a small farmer's daughter. So just have the goodness to show me the way into the kitchen, and let me have a basin of soup and boulli, if there happens to be any, till the next *patache* comes by for me to make a bargain to go to Moulins."

Madame Rigaud replied, that no vehicles of that description ever passed the place; and an explanation followed, from which it appeared that Jaqueline was in the new chateau of the Comte, and some leagues farther from the Cock and Bottle than when she commenced her ride.

"How could he think of serving me such a trick?"

she gasped, sinking into one of the velvet chairs, and all but sobbing. "He's mad, isn't he?"

"I should almost think he is," said Madame Rigaud. "To be sure, there is no accounting for the tricks of young men, I know that pretty well; nor their fancies neither; but *this* is so *very* extraordinary!" and, looking down upon her charge, she elevated her hands and then her eyes, and shrugged her shoulders expressively.

"I'll not stay here; I'm determined upon that!" exclaimed Jaqueline.

"That's right, my dear," said Madame Rigaud; and forthwith they concocted a plan of escape, which was to be carried into effect by the aid of Madame Rigaud's son Philippe, who was in the Comte's service; and in the meanwhile they retired to her private room to avoid observation; and there the said Philippe, a smart, active young man, presently made his appearance.

"It's a burning shame," he cried, when he had heard the story; "but I'll see Ma'mselle safe to the Cock and Bottle, and to Moulins too, if she will allow me. So, mother, you must go directly to the stables, and tell Pierre to put the side-saddle on the strawberry mare, and let me have Volante. Nobody will suspect you; and, by the time you come back, the Comte's breakfast will be served, and the footman will be engaged in waiting, and then Ma'mselle and I can slip off unnoticed. Cour-

age!" and he laughed, and slapped his thigh right jovially. But the moment his mother had disappeared and closed the door, his demeanour was totally changed, and making a serious face, and putting his hand on his heart, he bent his body forward most obsequiously, and then went upon his knees before Jaqueline, and vowed after a very solemn fashion, that not only would he conduct her to Moulins, but that it would give him the greatest of all possible satisfaction to accompany her throughout the whole journey of life.

"Do you suppose I'm going to ride on horseback all my days?" inquired the bewildered maid; "no, no. All I want is to get safe to the Cock and Bottle. But you'd better get up, and not make such a fool of yourself; for don't you see that the floor has been fresh ruddled, and you'll stain your best——"

Here her speech was cut short, and the scene abruptly changed, by the sudden opening of the door, and the appearance of a remarkably fat, red-faced, profusely powdered, well-dressed man of "a certain age," who, the moment he caught sight of Jaqueline, seemed fixed to the spot where he stood, with his eyes riveted upon her countenance. Whether he had observed Philippe's position was doubtful, as that sprightly youth had jumped upon his feet at the first movement of the door, and stood sheepishly against the wall, twirling his thumbs;

a task from which he was speedily relieved by the advance of the new-comer, who dismissed him from the room by a silent, authoritative wave of the hand.

"This must be the old Comte," thought Jaqueline, rising and bobbing her best curtsy. "No wonder he is surprised to see the like of me here; but I'll tell him all about it, and I daresay he'll be glad enough to send me off to the Cock and Bottle, if it's only to get rid of me."

"Oh! I beg, I entreat, Mademoiselle," gasped the unwieldy stranger; and as he spake he continued a series of short bows, ducking his red face as forward as he dare, without danger of destroying the equilibrium of his body. "Oh, Mademoiselle! Pray do not disturb yourself. It is a mistake, quite. Ah! Monsieur le Comte requests—oh, oh! Pray, be seated! Ugh! ugh! What can I say? What shall I do? I never was so perplexed in my life before. Oh! You will never forgive!"

"Yes, but I will, though," said Jaqueline; "I'll forgive all that's past, if you will but get me out of the way of your son."

"My son!" exclaimed the fat man; "Eh? How came Mademoiselle to know that I had a son? And he, the young rascal! has he dared to aspire so high? I could not have supposed him capable of such audacity!"

"Couldn't you?" observed Jaqueline; "well,

then, you ought to look after him better, and not let him go playing such precious tricks as he has with me this morning, deceiving me first by talking all sorts of nonsense, and then bumping me about the country on horseback, till I declare I'm quite uncomfortable."

The eyes of the huge red face before her here became dilated to an extraordinary degree; but the mental perception of their owner appeared to be eclipsed, as he stood with puffed-out cheek discharging his breath violently through his pursed-up mouth, as though playing upon a trumpet.

"It's no use being in a passion about it now," continued Jaqueline; "what's done can't be helped; and if you'll only see me safe to the Cock and Bottle——"

"What, I!" exclaimed the stout gentleman; "may I venture to hope that you will condescend to accept of my humble services?"

"To be sure I will," replied Jaqueline, "and thank you too. Why not?"

"Oh! this is too much happiness!" sighed the panting elderly beau, and forthwith, by the help of a chair, he lowered himself down upon his knees, and then attempted to seize the maiden's hand; but she somewhat too nimbly moved her chair and self backward, and thereby caused him to fall forward on all-fours, in which position he was when Madame Rigaud suddenly re-entered, and exclaimed

—"Ah! Monsieur Robert! what can be the matter?"

"I'm afraid the poor gentleman is taken suddenly ill," replied Jaqueline.

"What presence of mind! what angelic—humph!" muttered the patient, looking up, and winking in a very odd way at the maiden.

Madame Rigaud declared that it was of no kind of use for them to try to lift him up, so she lifted up her voice, and presently the room was crowded; for Monsieur Robert was no less a personage than the house-steward, or maître-d'hotel, who had been sent by the Comte to desire Madame Rigaud to inform the young lady that breakfast was served, and her presence to grace that meal was most respectfully requested, and anxiously desired.

Of this invitation Jaqueline was not made aware until the apoplectic invalid had been placed upon a sofa, and contrived to catch hold of one of her hands, and pinch it sadly. "Ah! I'm quite well now!" he exclaimed, "it was only a momentary—ah! I don't know what;" and, rising briskly, he ordered all present to leave the room, as he had something particular to say to the young lady. The domestics instantly withdrew; but Madame Rigaud remained, and whispered to Jaqueline that the horses would be ready in ten minutes, and then, in a louder tone, proposed that they should take breakfast together immediately.

At this proposition Monsieur Robert appeared much shocked, and spake incoherently about proper respect, and the Comte's particular desire, and his own most perfect devotion to the service of Mademoiselle; to which she replied—"You may as well save your breath to cool your broth, old gentleman. I've had quite enough of the Comte's tricks already this morning; and as for your services, they're of no use to me."

"Oh, cruel!" groaned Monsieur Robert. "Did you not just now accept them, and even condescend to request me to see you safe to some place?"

"Well, well, I don't want you now," said Jaqueline; "I've got an active young man, who will do a great deal better."

"Oh! how cruelly capricious!" he sighed, and the great red face was turned upward as he clasped his hands imploringly, and he was striving, no doubt, to concoct something very pathetic, when the young Comte burst in upon them, and began, in no measured terms, to upbraid Madame Rigaud for her misconduct in allowing his distinguished visitor to occupy any other than the best apartments. He then apologised to Jaqueline, and taking her hand, and bowing respectfully, led her out of the room toward the *salle à manger*, from whence issued certain savoury odours, which operated more powerfully upon the hungry maiden than could all the fine speeches he continued to utter. So, deter-

mined to make a good breakfast, to strengthen her for her flight with Philippe, she allowed herself to be conducted into the elegant apartment, where she was received by the company with as much deference as though she had been a princess. The party consisted of half-a-dozen persons; and as there were no other ladies present, she was the great object of attention. The Comte gallantly pressed her to partake of certain delicacies at table; and, when she laconically expressed her approbation thereof, seemed quite in ecstasy. One gentleman complimented her upon patronising the dress of the country, and thereby evincing a purity of taste far superior to that of ladies who fancy nothing becoming unless brought from Paris. "Ah!" sighed another, "with such personal attractions, Mademoiselle has little need to trouble herself about fashions."—"No," said Jaqueline; "that's the mantua-makers' and milliners' business, not mine; I never trouble my head about such things, not I."—"What elevation of mind!" exclaimed the Comte.—"How infinitely above vulgar prejudices!" ejaculated one of his companions; and the rest expressed their admiration by the epithets "charming," "admirable," &c. &c. In short, everything she uttered was declared to be replete with wit or sentiment; and the result was, that by the time she had finished a very hearty *déjeuné à la fourchette*, she began to question whether she really might not

possess certain endowments for which she had never previously given herself credit, and had not quite decided, when the Comte contrived to draw her attention toward a window, and so have her to himself. He then, without loss of time, made her a regular offer of himself, his chateau, and his fortune; and Jaqueline replied with a sigh, "I don't think I shall do for you, nor you for me; but, howsomever, I can't say nothing more about it without asking my father."

"I'll ask him!" exclaimed the enraptured Comte; "I'll ride over to him directly. I'll bring him back to dinner. We have a priest in the chateau," and he knelt and pressed her hand to his lips.

"Well, upon my word!" said Jaqueline, "some people fancy they've only to ask and have. Just as if my father would give me away like a bunch of grapes."

"What an admirable simile!" exclaimed the Comte. "Yes, a bunch of grapes, sound, ripe, beautiful to the eye, exquisite in flavour, blooming, delicate to the touch——"

"Better not try," muttered Jaqueline, for, as he spake, he rose up and approached rather too near. "Paws off! as I told you before, or you'll catch it presently," and she pushed him away with a vigour seldom displayed by ladies of his own rank.

"This is too much!" exclaimed one of the party, rushing forward. "Monsieur le Comte, you forget

yourself strangely. No man can stand tamely by, and see such innocence and beauty annoyed. You must perceive that your attentions are unwelcome, and I insist upon it that you proceed no farther. Don't be alarmed, Mademoiselle, I will protect you."

"You insist!" cried the Comte, scowling fiercely. "It is you who forget yourself, Monsieur le Capitaine, when you dare to address such language to me."

"Dare!" shouted the captain; "for this lady's sake I would dare a thousand such miserables."

"I think a walk into the open air may be of service to you," observed the Comte, pointing significantly to the door.

"Good!" replied the captain, and after bowing respectfully to Jaqueline, he withdrew, and was almost immediately followed by the Comte and two more of the party, leaving only a dapper thin little gentleman dressed in black, who immediately strutted up to our heroine, and, laying his hand upon his left breast, began to hem and cough, and looked exceedingly perplexed and miserable. "What's the matter with *you?*" thought Jaqueline; "you look as if you had eaten something that had disagreed with you."

"That benevolent glance has revived me!" exclaimed the small gentleman. "Ah, mademoiselle! I have struggled hard. The Comte is my patron. I would not be ungrateful; but—but—I am con-

vinced that a lady of your delicate perceptions, of your incomparable—Oh! what shall I say? I am a notary, and seldom want words—but on this occasion they seem to fail me. I mean to say that I am firmly convinced that neither my friend the Comte nor his boisterous comrades are fit or capable of—ahem! In short, a quiet life, with one who would do his utmost to secure your affections, to merit your esteem, and to promote your happiness, is——"

"Just the very thing I should like," said Jaqueline; "but the question is, where to find him."

"Behold him here!" exclaimed the notary, dropping on his knees. "Never before did this heart surrender to beauty. Hitherto my whole soul has been given to making money, without being very particular how, I must own; but now, all is changed! There is about you an irresistible charm——"

"Ah!" shrieked Jaqueline, "so there is! I see it all now! It's all along of that water I drank this morning. Get out of the way, do!" and, rushing past him, she ran off to the room of Madame Rigaud, whom she earnestly entreated to introduce her to the priest of the family without loss of time. "I shall place myself under his protection," said she.

"The resolution does you great credit," observed Madame Rigaud. "He will attend you here immediately, I am sure; for he is an excellent man, and always delighted to do good."

About five minutes after, as Jaqueline was standing alone before a mirror, endeavouring vainly to discover what change in her appearance had caused such a marvellous change in the manners of the men toward her, the door slowly opened, and a venerable grey-haired ecclesiastic stood gazing upon her in respectful silence.

"Ah! Father Dunstan!" she exclaimed joyously, "is that you? Oh! I am so rejoiced to see you! Don't you know me?"

"Really, Mademoiselle," said the holy man, nervously, "there must be some mistake. If I had ever had the honour of being introduced to you, I am sure I could not have forgotten——"

"No, I can't be mistaken," observed Jaqueline, "only I'm grown a good deal since you left St Denis. Many a time you've dandled me on your knee; but I suppose I'm too heavy for that now; so come, sit down, and I'll take a chair beside you, or perhaps I ought to go upon my knees, for it is a sort of confession that I've got to make, though really I didn't think there could be any great harm in just drinking a little water. However, you'll tell me what to do, I know; for you were always very kind and indulgent, though you used to thump me on the back, and laugh at me for romping, and say that I was too strong for a girl, and ought to have been a boy."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the bewildered priest.

"Perfectly true, *mon bon père*," said our heroine. "Look at me again. There, I am your old playfellow, Jaqueline Triquet."

"Is it possible!" repeated the good man, elevating his hands and eyes in especial wonder.

Jaqueline then told her tale, and in conclusion, said, "And now, my good father, I place myself under your protection, and hope you will take me away from this place, and all the strange people about it. I'll go anywhere with you; but had rather go to the Cock and Bottle, because there I shall be sure to find a *pâtache* to take me to Moulins."

"My dear child," said the priest fervently, "I will go with thee; I will protect thee; but while I am preparing for our departure, thou must leave this room, where thou art liable to intrusions, and I will place thee in the charge of good Madame Rigaud."

Jaqueline was accordingly removed to a more private apartment, where she awaited the priest's summons in great uneasiness, as Madame Rigaud, who was not particularly taciturn, visited her from time to time with strange accounts of what had passed, and was then going on among the household, all in consequence of her untoward presence therein.

It seemed that the Comte had wounded his friend the Captain, and that, while he was so laudably

engaged, a footman, anxious to gaze upon the charms of the bewitching fair one, had peeped through the opening of the half-closed door of the *salon*, and witnessed the scene between her and the amorous notary, the particulars of which he whispered to his master on his triumphant return. The Comte thereupon rushed furiously forward, and, discovering the luckless limb of the law still upon his knees, and apparently paralysed by Jaqueline's abrupt retreat, without any ceremony bestowed upon him sundry hard names and one particularly ugly kick, by the latter of which the little gentleman was so thrown off his guard as to abandon the chance of a lucrative legal process, and to demand satisfaction instanter. It was given, and the Comte was wounded; and then the notary, feeling that his suit was in no degree advanced by this display of his prowess, and yet smarting under the mortification consequent upon our heroine's style of receiving his addresses, most unadvisedly spake of her after the fashion of the fox in the fable, when he found that the grapes were above his reach. This produced certain sarcastic observations from another of the party, which led to a fresh encounter, that terminated by the legal functionary's being disarmed with a violent sprain in his right wrist.

Then, in the lower department, much altercation had taken place. Monsieur Robert thought proper to call Philippe Rigaud a young puppy;

and Philippe, instead of acknowledging his puppyism, as in duty bound, to his superior, vehemently apostrophised him as an old fool. The female domestics were all scandalised beyond measure at the blindness and stupidity of their sweethearts in particular, and the men-servants generally, in admiring an awkward country-girl, as some called our heroine; but all agreed in pronouncing her to be "no great things."

At length Jaqueline and Father Dunstan took their departure through a private road from the back of the chateau, and rode in silence, side by side, for nearly a league, when Jaqueline expressed her sorrow for the disasters and quarrels that have just been related.

"It was no fault of thine, my child," observed the priest; "it is ever thus when women are so exceedingly beautiful. Men don't know what to do with themselves. Heigho!"

"La, Father Dunstan!" exclaimed Jaqueline, "what can that have to do with the present case? I'm no beauty, that's certain, or some of our young fellows would have found it out long ago. You used to say yourself that I was more fit for a boy; and latterly I've been thinking the same, and had a great mind, since nobody would come a-courting to me, to dress myself up like a man, and try my luck that way."

"Most exceedingly dull and stupid must the

young men about St Denis be in the present generation!" said Father Dunstan. "But you'll find it very different at Moulins. Heigho!" and they rode on in silence for a considerable distance, and then Jaqueline exclaimed, "Why, this is the same way that I was brought this morning! Yes. And there I declare is part of the old castle, peeping above the trees. We shan't get to the Cock and Bottle to-night at this rate! But, bless us, *mon bon père*, what's the matter with you? Aren't you well?"

"Not exactly, my dear," replied the priest; "I feel a very peculiar sensation in my pericardium, and a dizziness about the head."

"Can I do anything for you?" inquired Jaqueline.

"I think," said Father Dunstan, "nay, I am sure that it would do me good to hear you talk a little, my dear Mademoiselle."

"Very well," replied Jaqueline, "I don't mind talking a great deal, if that will be of any service: but what must it be about?"

"Anything. Only speak kindly."

"Speak kindly! why, how can I speak in any other way to such a nice good old man as you are?"

"No, no, not very old. Don't talk so," said the priest, reproachfully.

"Well then, I wont," continued Jaqueline—"for I'll please you, if I can; and, now I look at you

again, really I shouldn't have thought you'd been so old as you are, if I didn't remember that, when I was a child, you looked much the same as you do now; and I've heard my father say——"

"Never mind what, my dear. Don't mention it."

"Very well, father, then I've done, though I can't see how it signifies about your age, when you are so hearty and strong as you are."

"Do you really think so?" inquired the delighted priest.

"Why, of course. One has only to look at you, and see that plain enough," said Jaqueline; and then, perceiving the sort of talk that was most likely to be agreeable to her companion, she continued to compliment him upon his good looks till they arrived at the ruins.

The old lady was absent; but Father Dunstan said he knew her well, and that she would be very angry if he did not make himself quite at home. So he prevailed upon Jaqueline to consider herself as his guest till their hostess's return; and bestirring himself with the alacrity of a youth, he had put up the horses, spread the table-cloth, lighted the fire, and was beating up an omelet, before Jaqueline had finished her simple toilet. When she expressed her wish to take the culinary department, he gently, but firmly and respectfully, requested her to take a seat, and let him have his own way, which she

accordingly did, marvelling exceedingly at his dexterity and accurate knowledge of the contents of the old lady's larder, and the spot in which everything was kept.

In due time they sate down to dine, and his attention to her during the meal was excessive, and therefore tiresome to one unused to form and ceremony. So, when it was finished, she reminded him of his old habit of taking a nap in the afternoon, and recommended him to do so on the present occasion, hinting, at the same time, her hope that, when he had so refreshed himself, he would be ready to escort her to the Cock and Bottle. But at this last suggestion he shook his head, and said something about the horses being tired, and then yawned and took a glass of wine, and then yawned again, and so on till he fell asleep.

"I think I'll go and lie down, and do the same," thought Jaqueline, "for I'm dreadfully fatigued with all this riding"—and she betook herself to the little dormitory in which she had been installed by the old lady on the preceding night; and after gaping once or twice, and wondering when she should get to the Cock and Bottle, she lost sight of her cares—and the next question she had occasion to ask herself was, "How long have I been asleep?"

It is a question which, after fatigue, we have all occasionally found it very difficult to answer. Jaqueline rubbed her eyes, and repeated it aloud,

and greatly was she astonished to receive a reply in the well-known tones of Father Dunstan, who was seated by her bedside. "You have slept soundly, my dear. It is now morning. I have kept watch over you, as I hope always to be permitted to do hereafter. Heigho!"

"La! Father Dunstan!" exclaimed Jaqueline, shrinking under the coverlet—"surely this is very improper conduct, although you are such a very old man."

"No, no," cried the priest, "I am not an old man. I feel that I am not. You will be very happy with me, and without you I cannot live. I have not slept a wink all night for thinking of you, and have made up my mind. It is of no use for you to refuse, as I've got you here in the middle of the forest. So agree at once to go with me to England, where priests are allowed to marry, and you will never repent it. Beautiful, beautiful creature as you are, I shall never cease to adore you!"

"You horrid, wicked old wretch!" shrieked Jaqueline, "get along out of the room immediately, or, if you don't, mind I have not taken off my clothes: I'll get up and give your old bones such a shaking —I will. Eh! What! You'd hold me down would you? Let go the clothes, will you! If I do but get my hands loose, I'll scratch your eyes out, I will, you ugly old—old—old monster! What! You'd smother me, would you? Help, help, mur-

der!" and making a violent effort as she shrieked, she felt herself suddenly released from the incumbent pressure.

"Oh, he's gone, is he!" she exclaimed, breathing hard after the struggle, and looking round the room, "better for him, or else I'd have—but bless me! I am undressed, after all! How very strange that I don't recollect——"

Here she was agreeably surprised by the appearance of her kind hostess, who came running into the room in great apparent alarm, to inquire what was the matter. The explanation that followed, consisted of the adventures which have been related; and when the old lady had heard them to the end, she remarked, with an odd sort of smile—"Well, never mind, my dear, you are safe out of their clutches now; so dress yourself, and come down to breakfast, for it is very near eight o'clock; but I did not call you before, as you seemed so sound asleep; and now I know what's happened, I don't wonder."

CHAPTER III.

"No, no, you may depend upon it I shall not tell anybody about it, for my own sake; for if it got talked of, it might come to the ears of the Comte and the rest of them, and they'd be after me again; but I've had quite enough of your gentry, and lots

of lovers; and if ever I should get another, I hope he'll be a plain sort of body like myself."

Thus said Jaqueline to her kind hostess of the castle, on their way to the Cock and Bottle, where they arrived after a pleasant walk, and parted without further adventures.

On the evening of that day our heroine was safely conveyed in the *patache* to the door of Madame Margot, who was a restauratrice in the Cours Public, a pleasant open space planted with trees in the town of Moulins. Her reception was most cordial; but Nicolas Margot, who officiated as *premier garçon* in the establishment, evinced no symptoms of that intense admiration which she had so recently excited. In a few days, however, they became excellent friends, as she cheerfully assisted him in his vocation during the morning, and he was consequently earlier at liberty to chaperon her about the town and environs, and all went on smoothly till the last day of the first week, which Jaqueline declared was Sunday.

How any Christian could so err, appeared wonderful—but she was positive, and would not be convinced, until the day had passed by, and the next came and was kept as Sabbaths are wont to be observed in France, by unusual gaiety all day, something more showy than common at the theatre in the evening, and fireworks "superbe et magnifique" at night. Then she was puzzled, and

came to the conclusion that townsfolk and country people kept the calendar in two ways.

"They will never persuade me to the contrary," she repeated to herself; "for I never can forget how I spent last Tuesday. But the old lady was right. It won't do to tell Madame Margot or Nicolas about that, or I don't know what they might not fancy, although I am sure it was no fault of mine that I got among such a pack of fools."

So she kept that secret; and as time passed merrily along, it somehow happened that she and Nicolas glided unawares into such a degree of confidence, that it was the only secret she withheld from him.

The influence of the moon upon disordered brains may probably account for much of the nonsensical talk that passes between young persons of different sexes, when walking in pairs on "a shiny night;" and that or something else, ere a month had elapsed, caused a great alteration in the tone and subjects of familiar chat between Jaqueline and Nicolas.

This was observed by Madame Margot, who thereupon also changed her manner, by kissing her guest more fervently at night ere she retired to rest, while Nicolas looked very much as though he should like to do the same.

"She is a charming, good girl," said the mother to her son, when they were left together on one of these occasions, after Jaqueline's departure.

"That she is!" exclaimed Nicolas, stretching out his legs, twirling his thumbs, and looking down into the fire.

"And *so* good-tempered!" added Madame Margot, "and so willing and clever about a house! Why, since she has been here, she has been as good as a waiter to us."

"Worth more than all we ever had put together in a lump," said Nicolas.

"She would make an excellent wife," observed the mother, looking archly at her son; but he would not look at her, being apparently watching some change going on among the ashes. "And she will bring her husband some money too," she added, after a pause.

"The devil take the money!" exclaimed Nicolas, jumping up and striding hastily across the room.

"Oho! Is it so?" thought the restauratrice; "then the omelet's ready for the pan;" and, in the spirit of that conviction, she led her son into a conversation, the result of which was, that in the course of a few days she contrived to make an arrangement with a neighbouring *traiteur*, whereby he engaged to take charge of her establishment for the space of one month, leaving her and her son at liberty to take a journey into the country on business.

What passed during those few days between Jaqueline and Nicolas need not be told, except

that he now and then said things which reminded her of certain of the speeches of the "pack of fools," whom she had encountered on the memorable missing Tuesday.

It was a fine day in September, when Madame Margot, Jaqueline, and Nicolas, took their seats in a *patache*, and were safely conveyed to the Cock and Bottle, where, to our heroine's great surprise, they were welcomed by her father and the little old lady of the ruins.

The cause of this surprise may as well be told here. The said old lady was an eccentric good body, and, having taken a fancy to Jaqueline, resolved to be her friend. So, after her departure from the castle, she went over to St Denis to make inquiries, as (like all benevolent persons) she had often been deceived. All that she heard of her young *protégé* was to her heart's content, and, by means of the *curé*, with whom she was acquainted, she found no difficulty in gaining the friendship of papa Triquet, to whom she related the particulars of her interview with, and intentions toward his daughter. She then, with his consent, wrote a letter to Madame Margot, authorising her, in case of inquiry touching such matters at Moulins, to state that Jaqueline Triquet would, on her wedding-day, receive from her a given quantity of that dross which Nicolas thought fit afterwards

to proffer to his infernal majesty. This circumstance was not made known to the lovers till after the marriage, when the promise was strictly fulfilled.

And now, to the reader's imagination may be left all the particulars of the journey homeward—how papa Triquet flirted with the fat widow and the little laughing old lady—how Jaqueline was more envied by her friends, on her return from than on her departure for Moulins—how Nicolas and she, having once began each to fancy that there was something very capital in the other, proceeded onward in the delusion till each seemed perfect in the other's eyes, though to the world in general there really appeared nothing very particular in either of them.

The wedding-day passed, with accustomed gaiety, at St Denis; and towards the close thereof, when the bride was allowed a short respite from dancing, the good little old lady took her aside, and gave her certain reasons whereby to account for the missing Tuesday, concluding by observing —"I would not tell you before, because I thought it might be a lesson to you not to wish for beauty, or think of acquiring attractions by the use of charms and such nonsense. The most powerful charm and attraction is a good temper and kind conduct. Ha, ha! Why, you don't look above

half convinced yet: but, remember, you were very much fatigued that night, and it was very sultry after the storm, and you were very thirsty, I dare-say, and so it is no great wonder that water was running in your head." But, probably, she forgot the long tales which she herself told that night, about the olden times of splendour and gaiety, with elaborate descriptions of furniture, liveries, &c. &c., which were not a little likely to have some influence in the affair.

As Jaqueline resolved to have no secrets unknown to her husband, she related the whole matter to him on the following day, and then said, "It seemed to me as if I saw all those people as plain as I see you now; and if all that then happened was a dream, how do I know but I am in a dream now?"

"It really seems to me as if I was, my dear Jaqueline," said her spouse. "But it is a very happy one, and I am in no hurry to wake."

Our intended limits are already exceeded. We shall, therefore, only put on record, for the benefit of future tourists, that in the Cours Public at Moulins they may still find excellent accommodation for large and small parties at the house of a restaurateur, whose buxom, bustling wife, Madame Jaqueline, manages matters after a fashion that induced a gourmand to observe latterly—"With such cook-

ing a monkey might eat his own father." Her attentions are unremitting—and the only piece of unasked advice that she is in the habit of offering to her guests is, never to drink cold water, particularly in hot weather, without tempering it properly with good wine or *Eau de Vie*.

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